FAIRBURY, ILLINOIS AND THE 1893 CHICAGO COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION

by

Dale C. Maley

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Fairbury, Illinois and the 1893 Chicago Columbia Exposition
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The purpose of this book is to educate and entertain. The author and publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility with respect to any loss or damage caused by the information contained in this book.

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Foreword

Fairbury is a small town located in Central Illinois. It is 100 miles south of Chicago and 60 miles east of Peoria. It was founded in 1857 when the railroad first crossed Central Illinois.

Fairbury was home to one of great horse importers of Illinois, John Virgin. He was named by the Governor of Illinois to be on the planning commission of the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition.

The Keeley Institute was founded in 1891 as an alcoholic treatment center in Dwight, Illinois, 30 miles north of Fairbury. Many Fairbury citizens worked at the Keeley institute during the years it was open from 1891 to 1965.

The inspiration for the plot of this short story came from Erik Larson's book The Devil in the White City. Larson interwove two stories into one book. The first story was the planning, building, and operation of the 1893 Chicago Columbia Exposition. The second story was America's first serial murderer, H.H. Holmes.

John Virgin and the many Fairbury citizens who visited the Chicago Columbia Exposition had no idea America's first mass murderer was in Chicago. He was operating a boarding house for Exposition visitors and killing his patrons.

This short story interweaves the stories of John Virgin planning the Exposition, William Stackpole wanting to use his creativity for the Exposition, Fairbury citizens visiting the Exposition, and a young girl from the Keeley Institute being murdered by H.H. Holmes.

The author would like to thank Diane Pawlowski for helping to provide some of the factual information for this short story.

If you are interested in early Fairbury area history, this short story will help you understand Fairbury's role in the 1893 Columbia Exposition.

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CHAPTER 1

Fairbury

Fairbury is a small town located in Central Illinois. It is 100 miles south of Chicago and 60 miles east of Peoria. It was founded in 1857 when the railroad first crossed Central Illinois.

There are three history books that cover the founding of Fairbury and its early residents.

The first published history book on Livingston County, Illinois, was ***The History of Livingston County, Illinois*** by W.M. LeBaron published in 1878.

The second published history book on Livingston County, Illinois, was ***Portrait and Biographical Album of Livingston County, Illinois*** by Chapman Bros. published in 1888.

The third published history book on Livingston County, Illinois, was ***Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Livingston County Volume II.*** It was published by Bateman and Selby published in 1909.

By 1890, Fairbury was a thriving town. Its population, including the farming areas of Avoca, Indian Grove, and Belle Prairie townships was probably between 5,000 and 10,000 people.

Fairbury also had three operating coal mines, which provided many mining jobs.

Before the age of the automobile, horses were critical for transportation and farming. The breeding and sale of horses was a major business for the entire state of Illinois.

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CHAPTER 2

John Virgin

The biography below of John Virgin came from the book ***Portrait and Biographical Album of Livingston County, Illinois*** by Chapman Bros. published in 1888.

JOHN VIRGIN. Remarkable strides have been made in the improvement of the quality of horses and other domestic animals in this country within the past few years, and in Livingston County may be found some of the men who have accomplished so much in this respect.

One of these gentlemen, whose name is known throughout the country, resides at Fairbury. He is engaged in importing, breeding and dealing in French draft horses, and brings to bear in his business a rare amount of enterprise and skill. To him belongs the honor of first introducing this stock of horses into Livingston County, and since those pioneer days in the development of this noble animal in this section of the State, no man has done more and deserves higher praise than he, and in presenting his portrait, which we do in this connection, we give to our patrons the picture not only of an enterprising business man, but an estimable and worthy citizen. He takes special interest in all movements for the public good, and contributes liberally both of his time and means to every good work.

Mr. Virgin is a native of Indiana, and was born in Carroll County on the 10th of August, 1838. He is the son of Thomas and Lucinda (Girard) Virgin, who were natives of Ohio. The former was reared to manhood in that State, moved to Indiana and was there married. He was a farmer by occupation and became a citizen of Illinois, where he continued the cultivation of the soil up to the time of his death, which occurred in 1870. His widow and family of eight children are all still living.

Our subject came with his parents to Illinois in 1854, and located near Pontiac, where he worked on a farm until 1870, and during that year moved to Fairbury. In 1868 he began the breeding of French draft horses, which, as above indicated, was before anyone else had inaugurated this enterprise which has since proved to be of such vast importance, not only to the agriculturists of the country, but to the business interests of the great cities.

In 1872 he made the first importation of these horses to Livingston County, bringing at that time three splendid animals. Of late years the purchase of these horses in France is effected through a resident party in that country, who buys the finest stock and consigns them to Mr. Virgin for sale. Since beginning the business he has shipped between 400 and 500 animals, and the sales now amount to $30,000 or $40,000 annually. When Mr. Virgin began the business he had no capital with which to operate, and the first money used was borrowed at a time when he was a farm tenant. His splendid success from such a beginning certainly indicates rare business talent.

Mr. Virgin was married, Jan. 26, 1865, to Miss Sarepta J. McDowell, of Fairbury, the ceremony being performed by Rev. John Houston, of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mrs. Virgin was born in Livingston County April 5, 1842, and came from a pioneer family who settled in Avoca Township in 1832. The names of her parents were John and Elizabeth (Moore) McDowell, natives respectively of Ohio and Tennessee. Mr. and Mrs. Virgin have had four children: Georgie, who was born Oct. 23, 1866, and died Sept. 12, 1881; Minnie, who was born Aug. 18, 1868; Alta, Aug. 4, 1870, and Daisy, Feb. 25, 1875.

Mr. Virgin was a member of Company K, 3rd Illinois Cavalry, for three years. He entered as a private Aug. 7, 1861, and was promoted Orderly Sergeant, in which capacity he acted for nearly three years. He participated in all the heavy battles of the West, and was taken prisoner Nov. 25, 18(33, at Vermillionville, La., and was held for thirty days when he was paroled. He remained on parole seven months, during part of which time he served as Quartermaster in the parole camp, and upon being exchanged remained in this capacity until the expiration of his term of service. He was discharged Sept. 4, 1864, at Springfield. Ill.

The firm of Virgin, Brown & Co., own 400 acres of fine land in various tracts which is specially devoted to raising fine stock. Much of this land is under a fine state of cultivation. Mr. Virgin is a Republican, and takes great interest in both the National and local campaigns managed by that party. Mr. V. is and has been a member of the State Board of Agriculture for the past four years, and is now General Superintendent of the State Fair and fat-stock show. He is one of the charter members of Fairbury Post No. 75, G. A. R., and has occupied most of its posts of duty and is now Commander. He takes great pleasure in attending State Encampments and meeting his old comrades. He and his estimable wife are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and contribute liberally to the support and maintenance of that organization.

John Virgin built a "Horse Palace" for his horse business in Fairbury:

John Virgin's annual sales in 1878 was $30,000 to $40,000 for importing French horses. This would be equivalent to $750,000 to $1 million in 2015 dollars.

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CHAPTER 3

William Stackpole

East Coast Family

There were a few early families in Fairbury that came from the East Coast of the United States. The William Stackpole family was one of these families. They came from Maine.

Patent

Stackpole always had some kind of new business scheme during his life. He got interested in making canals and dredging rivers. He even applied and received a U.S. Patent for a piece of dredging equipment:

W. T. STACKPOLE.

Dredging-Apparatus.

No. 156,260. Patented Oct. 27, 1874.

Fig. 1.

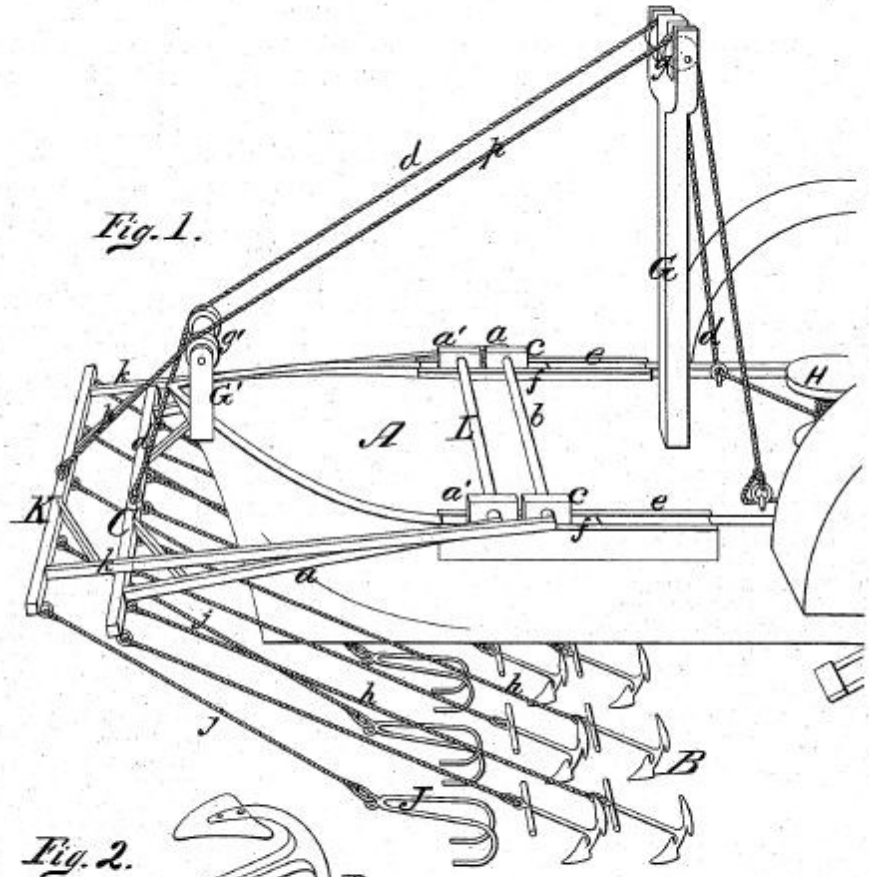
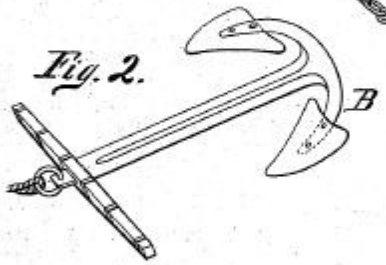


Fig. 2.



WITNESSES

Villette Anderson

George E. Upshaw.

By

INVENTOR

W. T. Stackpole,

Chipman Foamer & Co,

ATTORNEYS.

THE GRAPHIC CO. PHOTO-LITH. 39 & 41 PARK PLACE, N.Y.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WILLIAM T. STACKPOLE, OF FAIRBURY, ILLINOIS, ASSIGNOR OF ONE-HALF HIS RIGHT TO ALLAN A. BURTON.

IMPROVEMENT IN DREDGING APPARATUS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **156,260**, dated October 27, 1874; application filed March 3, 1874.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, WILLIAM T. STACKPOLE, of Fairbury, in the county of Livingston and State of Illinois, have invented a new and Improved Device for Reducing Sand, Mud, or Gravel Bars on the waters of the Mississippi and tributaries, or at their mouths, or any other waters, and of deepening the water in creeks, rivers, harbors, estuaries, or shoals in lakes, sea, rivers, &c., of which the following is a specification:

The object of this invention is to deepen rivers, harbors, and other water-ways, and to reduce "bars" of sand, mud, or gravel, which may be formed therein, by the attachment to a vessel, which is propelled by steam or other motive power, of gangs of marine plows or "drags" of suitable construction, which will form channels in the bars or beds and loosen the material of which they are composed, so that it will be loosened and carried off by the natural tides and currents, or by the commotion of the water produced by the wheels used to propel the vessel. My object is also to remove "snags" and other obstructions which may lie upon the surfaces of the bars, or be embedded therein, by the employment, in combination with the marine plows or drags, of one or more gangs of grappling-hooks suitably attached to a hoisting apparatus, as will be hereinafter explained.

The following is a description of my improvements:

In the annexed drawings, A designates the forward part of a side-wheel steamer having my improvements applied over the bow, but in carrying my invention into effect I contemplate its application to any of the well-known vessels which are propelled by side wheels or stern wheels. B designates a gang of anchor-shaped plows, which are suitably yoked together and respectively connected to a strong beam, C, by means of ropes or chains *h*. The beam C is rigidly braced to two vertically-vibrating arms, *a a*, which are secured to the ends of a rock-shaft, *b*, that has its bearings in blocks *c c*. These blocks *c c* are held down in place in grooved ways *e e*, constructed on the gunnels of the vessel, and are allowed endwise adjustment in the ways. In rear of the bearing-blocks *c c* I apply blocks of india-rubber or other suitable springs, indicated by letters *f f*, the object of which springs is to allow the blocks to yield in the event of the plows B meeting with any great obstruction, which would be liable to break them or derange the machinery. To the beam C a chain, *d*, is attached, which is carried over one of two pulleys, *g*, at the upper end of a substantial standard, G, and thence passed around a windlass, H. By these means the plows B can be raised and depressed and hauled inboard. At the bow of the vessel I shall also erect a standard, G′, with pulleys *g′* on its upper end, over which I shall carry the chain *d*, as shown in the drawing. Each one of the anchors B I shall construct with two broad shovel-shaped flukes, which will form channels in the bars and loosen up the earthy deposits; and these anchors B I shall connect together by means of steel yokes or short ropes, applied either to their eyes, their stocks, or their flukes or shovels, for the purpose of keeping the channels formed by them parallel to each other and at even distances apart. In other words, the yokes referred to keep the anchors from spreading or being directed out of their true course. Gangs of anchor-shovels may be applied, as above described, to both ends of a boat and to the sides thereof, in which case the boat can be moved forward and backward over a bar without having to turn the boat around, thus saving time and labor.

During the operation of plowing up the earthy deposit and stirring the same, the paddle-wheels which propel the vessel will materially aid in removing the deposit and suspending it in the water, to be carried off by the natural currents. When the water is very deep the vessel should be so freighted or ballasted with water, or other ballast, that the paddle-wheels or propeller will be brought very near the shoal or bar being dredged. The drag may be made on the principle of the harrow or plow. If of the latter, I retain the anchor principle, as described, and if of the former, the teeth or scarifiers may be secured to a suitable frame, properly loaded to keep it down to its work. When the bottom is supposed to be obstructed with sunken logs,

(snags,) or other bodies embedded in the earthy deposit, I employ a gang of hooks, J, of suitable construction, which are connected together by means of metal rods or rope-ties *j*, and which are, respectively, attached to a strong beam, K, on the ends of vertically-vibrating arms *k k*. These arms *k k* are secured to the extremities of a rock-shaft, L, which has its bearings in the ways *e e*, and which may have springs applied to them, as described, for the blocks *c c*. The beam K with its grappling-hooks J can be raised or depressed by means of a chain or a rope, *p*, which is carried over a pulley on each one of the standards G G′, and attached to a capstan or windlass, like the chain or rope *d*. The grappling-hooks will precede the plows and clear the way of obstructions, and as often as a load of snags is gathered the said hooks will be elevated and the load deposited in the vessel A, or in a flat-boat drawn by the same.

In deep-water dredging—with still deeper water on each side of the bar or shoal—the anchor plow-beam may be brought under the vessel's bottom and made to rest solidly against the keel, and there held by means of a cable fastened to a ring-bolt on the deck.

The anchor-plow and grappling-hook beams, if worked under water, will tend to materially increase the swell caused by the passage of the vessel, and thus the reflux of water will greatly aid the motion the machinery has induced in removing the newly-plowed earth, and in holding the loosened particles in solution for outflowing tides and currents to bear away.

Having described my invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. The combination, with an elevating-frame and its operating mechanism, of one or more gangs of submarine drags, B, flexibly connected, and independently applied to the said elevating-frame, substantially as described.

2. One or more gangs of grappling-hooks, J, combined with one or more gangs of submarine plows, B, and with an elevating apparatus, substantially as and for the purposes herein described.

3. Spring-cushions *f f* in the grooved ways *e e*, in combination with the rock-shaft blocks *c c* of the apparatus for elevating the gang of submarine plows B.

WILLIAM T. STACKPOLE.

Attest:
C. W. FAWKNER,
B. F. BURCH.

Fairbury House

Stackpole's house in Fairbury was one of the first houses built in Fairbury. It is still standing today. It is across the street east of the south-east corner of Marsh Park:

The William Stackpole house, now modernized, still faces Marsh Park. Put together with handmade nails like spikes, it was intended to be cyclone - proof.

Biography

A biography of William Stackpole appeared in ***The History of Livingston County, Illinois*** book by W.M. LeBaron published in 1878.

WILLIAM T. STACKPOLE, real estate, Fairbury; born in Thomaston, Lincoln Co., Me., Dec 18, 1827, but removed to Illinois in early childhood, with his parents, who settled in Tazewell Co., in the early Fall of 1832, where the subject of this sketch resided until 1849; in the Spring of that year he started for the gold fields of California, leaving his brothers home in Pike Col, April 4th, the party reaching the western slope of the Sierra Nevada's on the 8th day of September; he returned to Pekin, Illinois, in March 1851, where he built a warehouse and engaged in the produce business the following Fall, afterward connecting with it lumber and boating; subsequently he opened a coal mine; also improved a fruit farm of about 3,000 trees, in Peoria Co., opposite Pekin; this property is now known as Orchard Mines; in 1853, he purchased a large tract of land in what is now Anchor Township, McLean Co., and two years later commenced improving the same, being the pioneer in that township.

Mr. S. has taken an active interest in inland navigation in this country, having written many articles for the press on this important subject, and at the meeting of the Corporators of the Illinois River Improvement Company, held at St. Louis March 18, 1857. He was the first to call the attention of that body to the fact that the charter of said

company was not in conformity to the compact of 1787; removed to Fairbury, his present home, in October, 1861.

Married in 1856, to Miss Jennie S. Harlow. who was born in Watertown, N. Y.; four children by this union, one living Anna S.; lost three-Willie G., died Sept. 15, 1867; Mary L., Nov. 15, 1870; Isabella E., Oct. 7, 1871.

Pioneer Farmer in Anchor Township

An October 30, 1926, special history story in the Bloomington Pantagraph described how William Stackpole was a pioneer farmer in Anchor Township, south of Fairbury.

SOME CHOICE BITS OF EARLY HISTORY DEALING WITH ANCHOR TOWNSHIP

Was a Part of Cropsey Town-ship at the Beginning of Its Organization—William Stack-pole of Pekin Was the First Man to Begin Farming Operations There—Wild Life Was Plentiful and Deer Roamed the Prairies in Herds.

Early history of Anchor township from point of Interest, compares favorably with any in the county. It is located in the easternmost of the middle tier of townships and is bounded on the east by Ford county; south by Cheney's Grove township, the west by Martin and on the north by Cropsey township.

During most of its history it has been a part of Cropsey and of course, it is much blended with that. The first man to commence farming operations there was William T. Stack-pole, a resident of Pekin, doing. a grain and produce business on the Illinois river, then the only line of transportation known in this section of the state.

Buys 2,320 Acres

In the spring of 1855 Mr. Stack-pole came from Pekin with three teams to commence work on a large tract of land, including 2,320 acres, which he had purchased from the government. Twenty years later, while furnishing some data for a McLean county history, Mr. Stackpole wrote:

"I cannot forebear referring to the peculiar natural beauty of that prairie, the very heart of the 'Grand Prairie' of Illinois, In a state of nature as I saw it on that May morning in the spring of 1855 when I went with my men to begin my improvements. Then again on September 1, when its rich vegetation had reached its fulfillment. Not even a furrow of its virgin soil, nor even a spadeful of its earth, except by the United States surveyors, had ever been turned by man. To that date not even a shanty by white man or Indian had ever been erected within the bounds of Anchor township."

"Every foot of its soil was prairie except the small grove of two acres in the southwest quarter of section 5 then known as Cunningham's Bunch". The wide open prairie was shunned by the early settlers and their first occupation and cultivation were surrounded by serious difficulties in some respects."

Most Troublesome Enemies

Rattlesnakes, greenheads, and mosquitoes were the most troublesome enemies that engaged the new farmer. For two or three years prairie wolves were troublesome but these minor objections shrunk into insignificance compared with the terrible prairie fires. No loss of human life was ever known to occur but there was great loss of property. Grass grew to a height of eight feet giving great opportunity to the devouring element.

In the year 1859 Mr. Stackpole had 1,100 acres in grain, mostly in wheat which proved that year a failure. Up to this time, however, all his undertakings had been quite successful. The farm had been stocked with many cattle and sheep.

Deer Found in Herds

Deer, in those days, were so numerous that it, was not uncommon to see them in herds of from 5 to 50. The skeleton of a buffalo, the American bison, was found on the farm of Mr. Stackpole.

Disasters of the first year of the Civil war finished what the former uncontrollable events had commenced in the way of reverses for Mr. Stack-pole and in the year 1863, his land was sold out under a mortgage and he left penniless.

Other Settlers in the Township

Many other men helped, to make the history of the township, among whom were John Sharpless who came from Indiana; a Dr. Sabin who purchased a part of the Stackpole property; A. R. Jones, who commenced a great cattle-feeding and farming enterprise in 1865; John Ingram who came from Canada in the year 1866; Nathaniel Brinley who came in 1867; Henry Gilstrap who came from White Oak township; Moses H. Knight, a Christian preacher; R. H. Arnold from White Oak Grove; W. H. and F. M. Anderson from Martin township; Maj. J. B. T. Mann, an officer in the Mexican war who started a nursery in section 4; J. B. Pierce of Danvers township, John N. King and John P. Worley who came In the year 1868; and J. T. Tanner who came In the year 1869.

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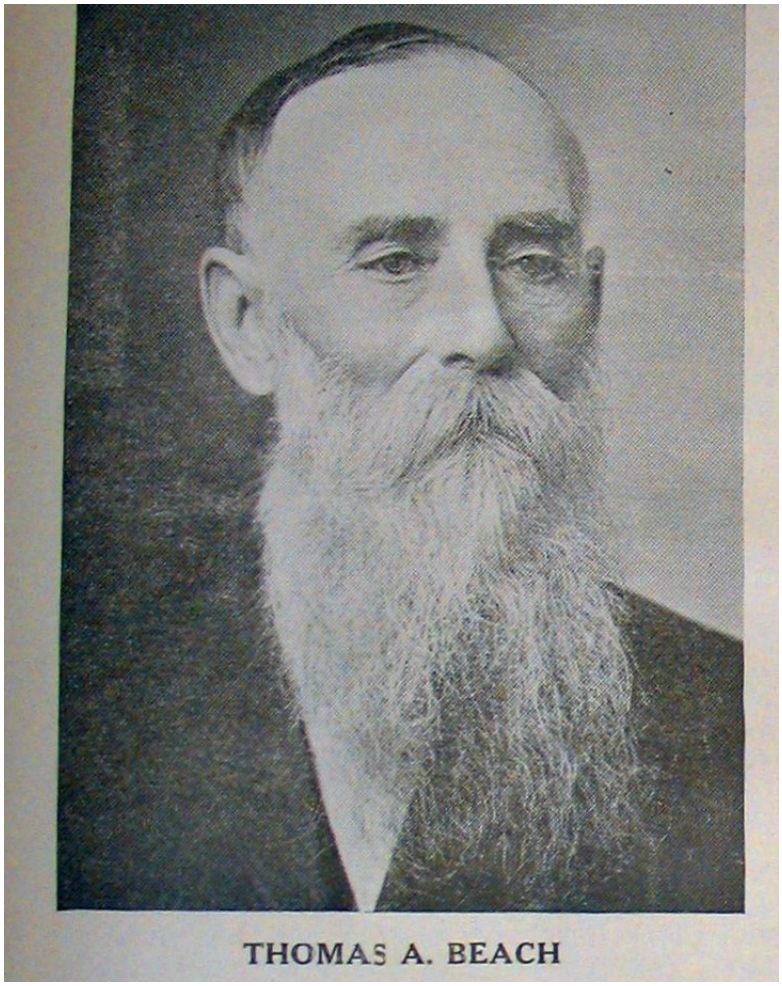
CHAPTER 4

Thomas A. Beach

The wealthiest man to ever live in Fairbury was Thomas A. Beach. He was a businessman and banker in Fairbury.



THOMAS A. BEACH

He built one of the most iconic homes in Fairbury, the "Lion" house on East Hickory Street. It is called the Lion house because there are 2 stone lion statues in the front yard.

In the 1888 history book, it was reported that Beach owned 2400 acres of Fairbury farm land. Using a price of $15,000 per acre, this land would be worth about $36 million in 2015 dollars! It is likely that Beach was worth over $50 million by the time of his death in 1911.

Beach also had an elaborate mausoleum constructed in the Fairbury cemetery:

The book ***Portrait and Biographical Album of Livingston County, Illinois*** by Chapman Bros. published in 1888, contains a biography of Thomas A. Beach:

THOMAS A. BEACH, of the firm of Beach & Dominy, bankers, at Fairbury, deals also in real estate, and at the present time is owner of 2,400 acres of land, besides a great deal of town property. His residence is one of the most substantial and imposing buildings in the village of Fairbury. It was constructed in 1857, and regardless of expense was fitted with all the modern conveniences.

Mr. Beach was born in the town of Amity, Madison Co., Ohio, on the 4th of December, 1828, and is the son of Lorenzo and Edith (Bull) Beach, who were natives respectively of New York and Vermont. Dr. Lorenzo Beach was born at New Haven, Vt., on the 7th of November, 175)8, and died at Fairbury, Ill., on the 9th of August, 1878, aged seventy-nine years, nine months and two days.

At the age of seventeen he moved to Worthington, Ohio, where he resided about one year. Thence he went to Urbana, Ohio, where he studied medicine with Dr. Parker three years, after which he removed to Amity, Ohio, and engaged in the practice of medicine for twelve years continuously, when he moved on a farm in the vicinity, and resided twenty-three years more, practicing medicine in connection with farming. He united with the Methodist Episcopal Church at Amity, Ohio, about the year of his first marriage, 1823, and for over fifty years was an active, consistent member of that denomination,

contributing very liberally of his means toward the building of a church at Amity, Ohio, and Fairbury, Ill. His business, as well as his Christian life, was a success. For three years before his death, his mind as well as his body perceptibly failed, though he spent much time in the examination of God's Word, and any allusion to it in his hearing always brought a hearty and ready response. He frequently sang those hymns and tunes familiar to him in his youth, but forgotten among the busier scenes of life, to come back and comfort him in after years.

He renewed his youth like the eagle. He was like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

His first wife bore him four children: James died in infancy; Hester married Mr. Ezra Dominy, both of whom died some years ago; Thomas A.; Chloe married Dr. Bartlett, and is now a widow. He married Mrs. Sarah A. Roop, Nov. 23, 1870, who was born Nov. 1, 1821.

Thomas A. Beach married Miss Amelia Bartlett, on the 8th of April, 1853, the ceremony being performed by the Rev. Dr. Smith, of the Methodist Episcopal Church. She was born on the 9th of July, 1828, in Hamilton County, Ohio, and was the daughter of Latham S. and Nancy (Comstock) Bartlett, natives of Vermont and New York State respectively. The mother died in 1840, and the father died in Ohio on the 13th of June, 1862, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. He was an early settler in Ohio, and was a farmer by occupation. For many years during his life he held the offices of Trustee and Class-Leader in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

He married for his second wife. Miss Hannah March, in 1842; she still lives at the age of sixty-nine years. Writing of his religious character and life, a biographer says of Mr. Bartlett: He was converted and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which he lived a consistent member until death. He was not one of those impulsive, vacillating characters, to be governed by the opinions and feelings of others, driven by adversity or led away by prosperity, but like every consistent, honest man, he with a strong faith and a well-balanced mind, served God and labored for the church from principle. He served the church for many years as Class-Leader and Steward, for which work he had a peculiar gift, as he was always cheerful, hopeful, charitable and forbearing, always preferring others to himself.

For some seven years previous to his death he suffered much from a nervous disease, and a part of this time he was deprived of church privileges. But at home he used the means of grace and continued to retain his confidence in God. and to feel that His grace was sufficient to sustain him in the hour of affliction. For three months prior to his death, his sufferings were beyond description ; every day during that time he thought would be his last, and often looked forward with joy to the time when his sufferings would end, that he might leave this world of woe to dwell in the land where pain cannot come. In the death of Father Bartlett, the church lost a true brother, the wife a kind husband, the children an affectionate father, our country a true patriot, and the oppressed of our land an unflinching friend." By his first marriage there were six children—William H., Josiah, Harriet, Cicero, Amelia and Sarah A. By the second marriage there were also six children

Lavanda, Orplia, Latham, Ella M., Charles E. and Horace G. ; two of the first children are living, and all but one of the last.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Beach have had four children : Sarah A., who died at the age of fourteen years; Chloe B., at the age of twenty-two years; Thomas L., in infancy; Ella, the wife of Dr. Lewis, of Fairbury, has two children—Thomas B. and Amelia. Mr. Beach arrived in Illinois on the 15th of August, 1834, and located on a farm two and one-half miles southwest of Fairbury, where he resided nine years, and then moved into the town, and for the following sixteen years engaged in the dry-goods and hardware business. In 1874 he established a banking business which he has since continued. Mr. Beach is a member of the Masonic fraternity, and has advanced as far as the Chapter. He is a Republican in politics; his wife is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

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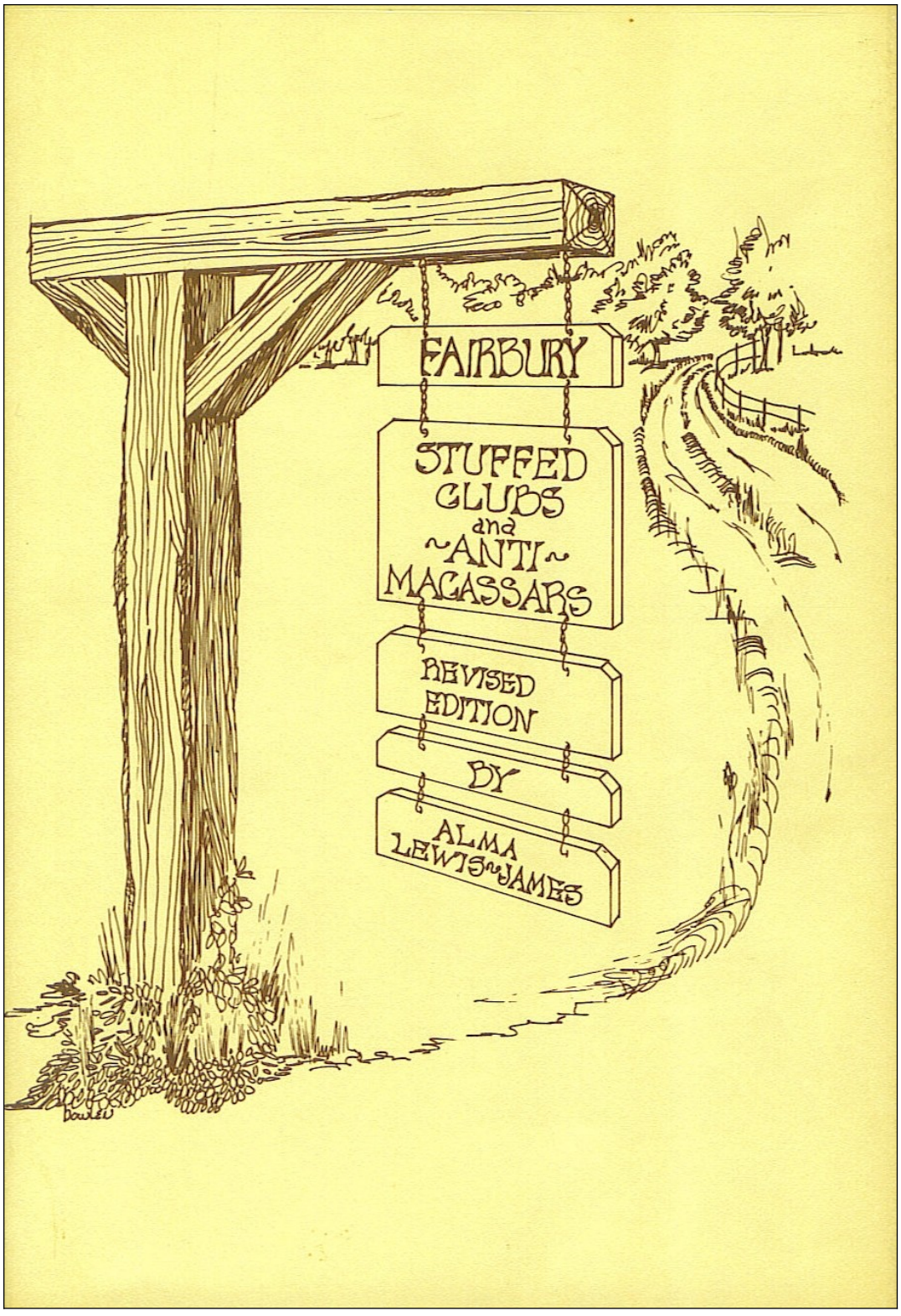
CHAPTER 5

Dr. George Lewis

George Lewis was from Ohio, and graduated from medical school in Ohio. He then married the only surviving daughter, Ella, of the richest man in Fairbury history, Thomas A. Beach.

Doctor Lewis practiced his entire career in Fairbury and delivered hundreds of babies. After the death of Thomas A. Beach, he and Ella moved into the Lion house on Hickory Street.

Dr. Lewis's daughter was Alma Lewis. She went on to become a Fairbury historian and wrote the book on Fairbury history titled ***Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars***.


FAIRBURY
STUFFED CLUBS and ~ANTI~ MACASSARS
REVISED EDITION
BY
ALMA LEWIS & JAMES

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CHAPTER 6

Keeley Institute

Wikipedia.org has a nice description of the Keeley Institute:

In 1879 Dr. Leslie Keeley announced the result of a collaboration with John R. Oughton, an Irish chemist, which was heralded as a "major discovery" by Keeley. The discovery, a new treatment for alcoholism, resulted in the founding of the Keeley Institute. The treatment was developed from a partnership with John Oughton, an Irish chemist, and a merchant named Curtis Judd.("Fargo, N.D., History Exhibition") The institute attempted to treat alcoholism as a disease. Patients who were cured using this treatment were honored as "graduates" and asked to promote the cure. Keeley became wealthy through the popularity of the institute and its well known slogan, “Drunkenness is a disease and I can cure it.” His work foreshadowed later work that would attribute physiological nature to alcoholism.

The Dwight, Illinois location was the original institute founded by Leslie Keeley that treated alcoholics with the infamous Keeley Cure, which was criticized by the medical profession. This cure, which later became known as the “gold cure”, expanded to over 200 locations in the United States and Europe.

The Keeley Institute eventually had over 200 branches throughout the United States and Europe. By 1900 the so-called Keeley Cure, injections of bi-chloride of gold, had been administered to more than 300,000 people. The reputation of the Keeley Cure was largely enhanced by positive coverage from the Chicago Tribune. The New York Times also featured coverage on the Keeley Institute as early as 1891. In 1893 a Brooklyn man's drunken rabble-rousing received coverage which noted he was a Keeley Institute graduate. The Times said "it is not everyday that a man from the Keeley Institute for the cure of drunkenness comes to New-York and gets into such a predicament."

After Keeley died in 1900, the patient numbers lowered, 100,000 additional people took the cure between 1900 and 1939. Oughton and Judd took over the company following Keeley's death, and continued to operate the institute. The organization, which had always drawn some criticism, faded into national oblivion with Keeley, its primary spokesman and defender, gone. By the late 1930s most physicians believed that "drunkards are neurotics [sic] and cannot be cured by injections." Keeley Institute director Oughton, Jr. said in a 1939 Time magazine article that the treatment program had cured "17,000 drunken doctors".

When John R. Oughton died in 1925 his son took over the declining institute. In 1939 the institute celebrated its 60th anniversary. A ceremony which unveiled a commemorative plaque bearing the likenesses of Keeley, Oughton and Judd attracted 10,000 people. The plaque, designed by Florence Gray, a student of Lorado Taft, is still on the grounds, complete with a time capsule. The Keeley Institute continued to operate until it definitively shut down in 1965.

THE Keeley Cure

Alcohol, Opium, Tobacco Using

Produce each a disease having definite pathology. The disease yields easily to the treatment as administered at the following Keeley Institutes:

A National Institution

DURING the past twenty years the Keeley treatment has rescued so many thousands of men and women from the drink and drug habit that it has made staunch friends in every community. Among its adherents are the most distinguished people in the country, including clergymen, physicians, lawyers, editors, business men, and government officials. In a word, the treatment, by reason of the great good it has done and is doing, has become a national institution, with headquarters in many States, as appear herein.

Here are the names of a few well-known people who indorsed and recommended the Keeley Treatment:

Gen. NEAL DOW — Rev. T. DEWITT TALMAGE
Col. C. H. TAYLOR — JOHN V. FARWELL
Judge-Advocate-Gen. GROESBECK
Dr. PARKHURST — Dr. EDWARD MCGLYNN
Rev. Canon FLEMING — Rear-Admiral WALKER
Ex-Governor CLAUDE MATTHEWS
FRANCES E. WILLARD — Ex-Gov. JOHN P. ALTGELD
Hon. LUTHER LAFLIN MILLS — Rt. Rev. JOHN SHANLEY
Gen. JAMES W. FORSYTH, U.S.A.
Ex-Gov. HASTINGS
Rev. Dr. GEO. C. LORIMER

Details of treatment and proofs of its success sent free on application to any of the institutes named.

LESLIE E. KEELEY, M.D., LL.D.

ALWAYS ADDRESS THE INSTITUTE NEAREST TO YOU.

Birmingham, Ala.
Los Angeles, Cal.
San Francisco, Cal., 1170 Market St.
West Haven, Conn.
Washington, D. C., 211 North Capitol St.
Atlanta, Ga.
Dwight, Ill.
Charlestown, Ind.
Marion, Ind.
Des Moines, Ia.
Crab Orchard, Ky.
New Orleans, La., 1626-38 Felicity St.
Portland, Me.
Lexington, Mass.
Detroit, Mich., 86 Lafayette St.
Grand Rapids, Mich.
Kansas City, Mo.
St. Louis, Mo.
Boulder, Mont.
Carson City, Nev.
Fargo, N. D.
North Conway, N. H.
Buffalo, N. Y.,
White Plains, N. Y.
Columbus, O.
Portland, Ore.
Philadelphia, Pa., 812 N. Broad St.
Pittsburgh, Pa., 4246 Fifth Ave.
Providence, R. I.
Columbia, S. C.
Sioux Falls, S. D.
Dallas, Tex.
Salt Lake City, Utah.
Richmond, Va.
Seattle, Washington.
Waukesha, Wis.
Toronto, Ont.
Winnipeg, Man.

"Non-Heredity of Inebriety," by Dr. Leslie E. Keeley, mailed on application.

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CHAPTER 7

H.H. Holmes

H.H. Holmes was actually born as Herman Webster Mudgett on May 16, 1861, in Gilmanton, New Hampshire.

During his life, he used several aliases including H.H. Holmes, Henry W. Howard, and Dr. Henry Howard Holmes. Historically, he is most commonly referred to as Dr. H.H. Holmes.

Mudgett was born to Levi Horton Mudgett and Theodate Page Price, both of whom were descended from the first European settlers in the area. Mudgett was his parents' third-born child; he had an older sister Ellen, an older brother Arthur, and a younger brother Henry.

Mudgett's father was a farmer from a farming family, and his parents were devout Methodists. According to the 2007 Most Evil profile on Holmes, his father was a violent alcoholic.

Mudgett claimed that, as a child, classmates forced him to view and touch a human skeleton after discovering his fear of the local doctor. The bullies initially took him there to scare him, but Erik Larson speculates that instead he was utterly fascinated, and he soon became obsessed with death.

On July 4, 1878, Mudgett married Clara Lovering in Alton, New Hampshire. Their son, Robert Lovering Mudgett, was born on February 3, 1880, in Loudon, New Hampshire. (As an adult, Robert was to become a certified public accountant, and served as city manager of Orlando, Florida.)

In 1882, Mudgett entered the University of Michigan's Department of Medicine and Surgery and graduated in June of 1884 after passing his examinations. While enrolled, he stole bodies from the laboratory and disfigured the bodies. Then he claimed that the people were killed accidentally in order to collect insurance money from policies he took out on each deceased person. He moved to Chicago to pursue a career in pharmaceuticals. It was also at this time that Mudgett began engaging in many shady businesses. These shady businesses included real estate, and promotional deals under the name "H.H. Holmes.

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CHAPTER 8

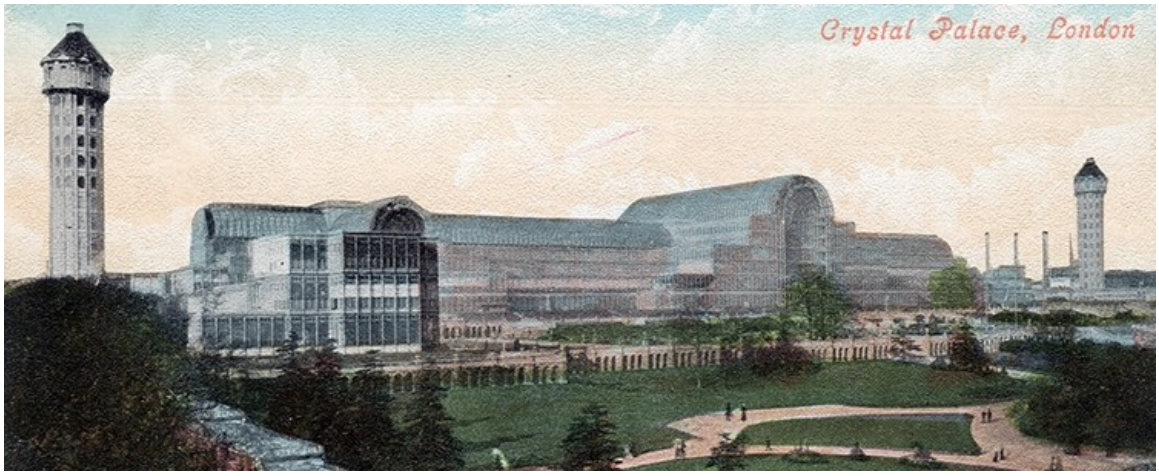
1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition

In the 1800's, world fairs were very popular and held in many different countries.

Dates	Exposition Name	Location	Theme
04/1851 - 10/1851	The Great Exposition	London	Industry of all nations
05/1855 - 10/1851	Paris International	Paris	Agriculture, industry, art
05/1862 - 11/1862	International	London	Industry and arts
04/1867 - 11/1867	Paris International	Paris	Agriculture, industry, art
05/1873 - 10/1873	Austrian International	Vienna	Culture and education
05/1876 - 11/1876	Centennial Exposition	Phildelphia	American Independence
05/1878 - 11/1878	Paris International	Paris	Agriculture, industry, art
09/1879 - 04/1880	Sydney International	Sydney	Agriculture, industry, art
10/1880 - 04/1881	Melbourne International	Melbourne	Arts, Manufacturing, Agriculture, and industry
04/1888 - 12/1888	Exposition Universal de Barcelona	Barcelona	Arts and Industry
05/1889 - 10/1889	Paris International	Paris	French Revolution
05/1893 - 10/1893	World's Columbian	Chicago	Discovery of America

Dates	Exposition Name	Location	Notables	Visitors (millions)	Cost ($ millions)	Area (hectares)
04/1851 - 10/1851	The Great Exposition	London	The Crystal Palace	6.00	1.65	10
05/1855 - 10/1851	Paris International	Paris	Bordeaux Wine classification	5.00	2.00	15
05/1862 - 11/1862	International	London		6.00	2.00	15
04/1867 - 11/1867	Paris International	Paris	Champ de Mars	15.00	4.50	69
05/1873 - 10/1873	Austrian International	Vienna	Rotunde	7.25	9.50	233
05/1876 - 11/1876	Centennial Exposition	Phildelphia	Telephone, Heinz Ketchup	10.00	8.00	115
05/1878 - 11/1878	Paris International	Paris	Statue of Liberty, Telephone, Braille	16.00	11.00	75
09/1879 - 04/1880	Sydney International	Sydney	The Garden Palace, Steam Trams	1.10		
10/1880 - 04/1881	Melbourne International	Melbourne	Royal Exhibition Buildings & Carlton Gardens	1.30	1.60	25
04/1888 - 12/1888	Exposition Universal de Barcelona	Barcelona	Arc de Triomf, Columbus Monument	2.30	1.70	47
05/1889 - 10/1889	Paris International	Paris	Eiffel Tower, Annie Oakley	32.00	0.30	96
05/1893 - 10/1893	World's Columbian	Chicago	Midway Plaisance, Fine Arts Building, Fluuorescent Lamp, Ferris Wheel	27.50	27.00	290

The first world's fair was held in London in 1851. It was famous for the glass Crystal Palace constructed just for the fair.



Each country tried to produce a greater world's fair than the last country to hold the event. The 1889 Paris International Fair was very popular. It is famous for the Eiffel Tower and Annie Oakley of America putting on exhibits.

To understand their importance, one must describe them in modern terms. They could be seen as a combination of the Olympics, Disneyworld, the Super Bowl and the National Gallery. They were an international entertainment and cultural event with lasting social importance.

The idea of celebrating the 400th anniversary of Columbus' voyages to the New World surfaced in the 1880s. Cities then began to scramble for the opportunity to host the Fair.

Chicago's City Council began their campaign to host the Fair on July 22, 1889, when it directed Mayor De Witt C. Cregier to appoint a committee of 100 citizens to carry out the project. Bank president Lyman Gage, publisher Andrew McNally, railroad tycoon George Pullman, and J.P. Morgan assistant Charles Schwab were among the business leaders who helped raise five million dollars in stock (500,000 shares at $10 each) to establish Chicago's determination that they would have the Fair. The House of Representatives took up the issue in late 1889 and considered petitions from Chicago, St. Louis, New York, and Washington, D.C. After months of consideration and conflict, the

House gave the victory to Chicago on February 24, 1890--but with a catch. The city was required to raise an additional $5 million.

However, the makeup of Chicago's Fair supporters was decidedly capitalistic and the task was by no means insurmountable. With a list of contributors and fundraisers which included G.B. Shaw, President of the American Loan & Trust Company; W.E. Hale, President of the Hale Elevator Company; W.J. Huiskamp of the Chicago Times; O.W. Potter, President of the Illinois Steel Company; Potter Palmer, real estate tycoon and owner of the Palmer House Hotel; and Stuyvesant Fish, President of the Illinois Central Railroad Company, the fundraising was soon accomplished.

A Presidential Proclamation recognizing Chicago's compliance with fundraising restrictions was issued on December 24, 1890, and the Fair officially belonged to Chicago.

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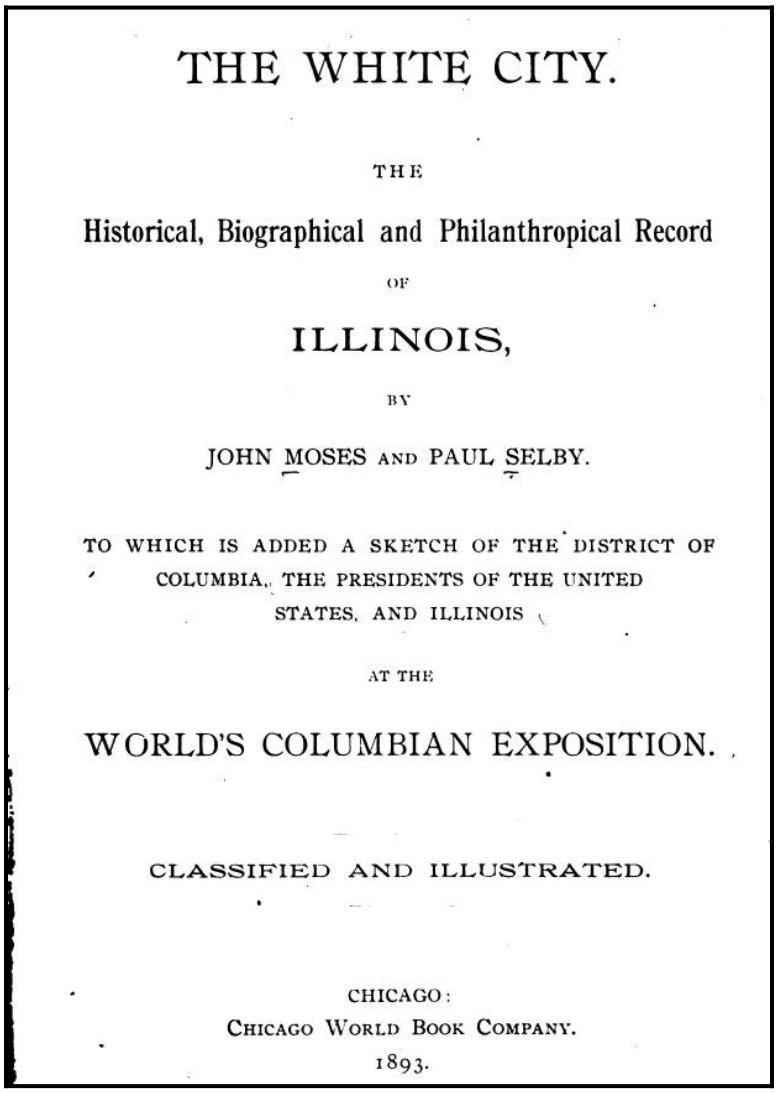
CHAPTER 9

John Virgin Named to the State Board of World's Fair Managers

In 1890, John Virgin of Fairbury was named to the Illinois State Board of World's Fair Managers.

The July 26, 1890, Fairbury Blade newspaper noted that John Virgin was a member of the Committee from the State Fair. It also noted he was going to help to choose the site for the World's Fair. The State Board is opposed to the Lake Front as a site. They want Illinois Agriculture fairly represented.

In 1893, a book was published describing the Chicago Columbian Exposition:



THE WHITE CITY.

THE

Historical, Biographical and Philanthropical Record

OF

ILLINOIS,

BY

JOHN MOSES AND PAUL SELBY.

TO WHICH IS ADDED A SKETCH OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, AND ILLINOIS

AT THE

WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION.

CLASSIFIED AND ILLUSTRATED.

CHICAGO:
CHICAGO WORLD BOOK COMPANY.
1893.

In this book is the list of Commissioners and Managers for the World's Fair, including John Virgin of Fairbury, Illinois:

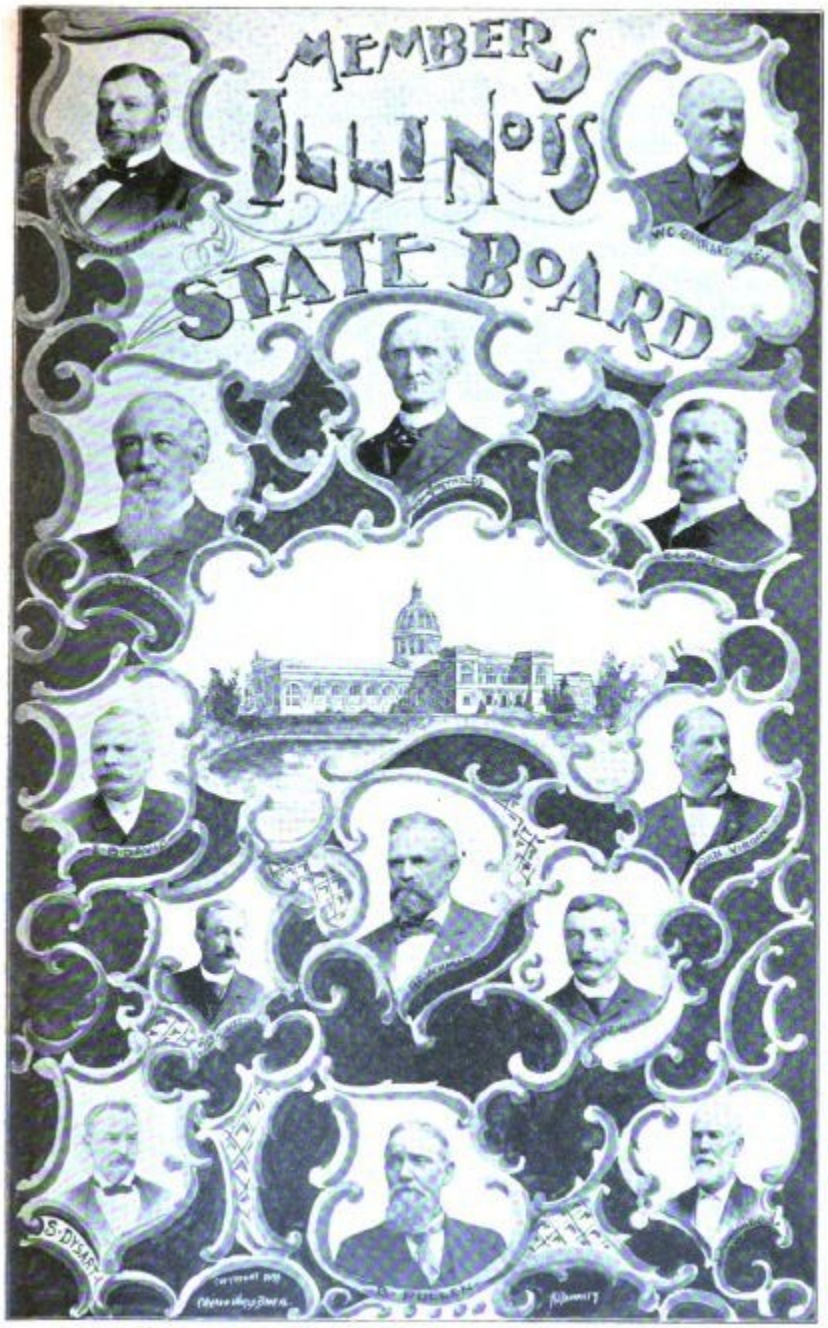
Illinois at the World's Fair.

THE National Commissioners of Illinois, named by the Governor and appointed by the President, are Chas. H. Deere, Moline, and A. T. Ewing, Chicago; Alternates, LaFayette Funk, Shirley, and De Witt Smith, Springfield; while the State Board of World's Fair Managers consists of the following officers and members:

LaFayette Funk, President, Shirley; David Gore, Vice-President, Carlinville; Wilson C. Garrard, Secretary, Chicago; John W. Bunn, Treasurer, Springfield; John P. Reynolds, Director-in-Chief, Chicago; J. Irving Pearce, Chicago; J. Harley Bradley, Chicago; Wm. Stewart, Chicago; Byron F. Wyman, Sycamore; A. B. Hostetter, Mt. Carroll; Samuel Dysart, Franklin Grove; W. D. Stryker, Plainfield; John Virgin, Fairbury; D. W. Vittum, Canton; E. B. David, Aledo; W. H. Fulkerson, Jerseyville; J. W. Judy, Tallula; S. W. Johns, Decatur; E. E. Chester, Champaign; James K. Dickerson, Lawrenceville; Edward C. Pace, Ashley; B. Pullen, Centralia; J. M. Washburn, Marion.

The Illinois National Board of Lady Managers are: Mrs. Richard J. Oglesby, Elkhart, and Mrs. Frances W. Shepard, Chicago. Alternates: Mrs. Marcia Gould, Moline, and Mrs. I. L. Candee, Cairo.

John Virgin's photo was also included in this book. It is just below and to the right of the building in the center of the page:



Here is just his picture from the page above:

JOHN VIRGIN

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CHAPTER 10

H.H. Holmes and His Murder Castle

Chicago

One of the reasons H.H. Holmes came to Chicago was that it was a booming town and would host the 1893 Columbia Exposition.

When he arrived in town, he found a busy drug store just three miles from where the 1893 Columbia Exposition would be held. He went in the drug store and found the woman running the store was very old and tired. He struck up a conversation with her.

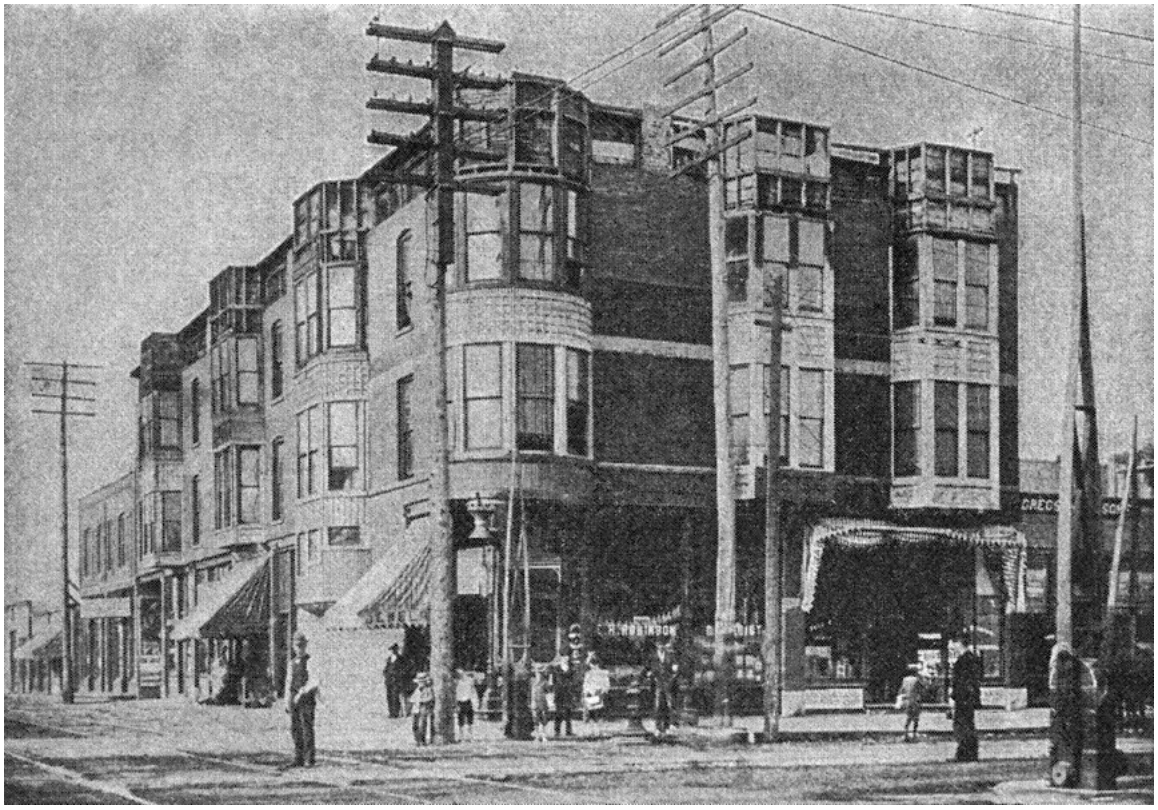
She said her husband was dying of cancer in their upstairs apartment. She had to run the store because her husband was too sick to work. Holmes informed him that he was a doctor and a pharmacist. He volunteered to work for her and run the drug store. She was happy to hire him.

A short time after this, her husband died of cancer. A couple of months later, the old woman disappeared and H.H. Holmes now portrayed himself as the owner of the drug store. It is likely this old lady was one of Holmes's first Chicago victims.

Holmes was quite a "ladies man". He treated all the woman customers very well, and they told their friends about the very nice druggist. Holmes liked young blonde ladies the best.

Construction of the Murder Castle

Holmes purchased a lot across from the drugstore. On this lot he built his three-story, block-long "castle" as it was dubbed by those in the neighborhood. The address of the Castle was 601-603 W. 63rd St.



It was called the World's Fair Hotel and opened as a hostelry for the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Part of the structure was devoted to commercial space.

The ground floor of the Castle contained Holmes' own relocated drugstore and various shops. The upper two floors contained his personal office and a maze of over 100 windowless rooms with doorways opening to brick walls, oddly-angled hallways, stairways to nowhere, doors open-able only from the outside, and a host of other strange and labyrinthine constructions.

Holmes repeatedly changed builders during the construction of the Castle, so only he fully understood the design of the house. Many construction workers toiled for one or two days on the house, and then were fired for no reason by Holmes. They were fired because Holmes did not want anyone to know the design of the Castle.

During the period of building construction in 1889, Holmes met Benjamin Pitezel, a carpenter with a past of lawbreaking. Holmes then exploited Pitezel as a stooge for his criminal schemes. A district attorney later described Pitezel as Holmes' "tool… his creature."

Benjamin Pitezel

After the completion of the hotel, Holmes selected mostly female victims from among his employees, lovers, and hotel guests. Holmes required as a condition of employment that his employees take out life insurance policies. Holmes would pay the premiums but he was also the beneficiary. He would later kill these victims.

Some were locked in soundproof bedrooms fitted with gas lines that let him asphyxiate them at any time. Other victims were locked in a huge soundproof bank vault near his office, where they were left to suffocate.

The victims' bodies were dropped by secret chute to the basement. There the bodies were meticulously dissected, stripped of flesh, crafted into skeleton models, and then sold to medical schools.

Holmes also cremated some of the bodies or placed them in lime pits for destruction. Holmes had two giant furnaces as well as pits of acid, bottles of various poisons, and even a stretching rack. Through the connections he had gained in medical school, he sold skeletons and organs with little difficulty.

SIDE VIE
SHOWING
THE UNDERGROUND CREMATORY

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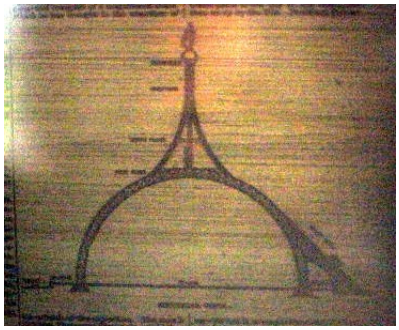
CHAPTER 11

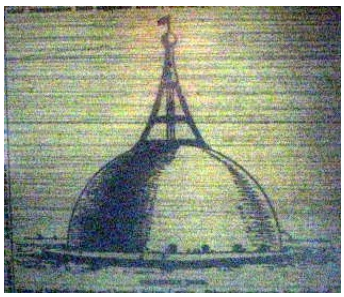
Stackpole's Dome

William Stackpole always had new ideas for new ventures.

In the October 18, 1890, edition of the Fairbury Blade newspaper, there was a story about Stackpole's latest wonderful idea. It was for a Columbian Exposition Dome for the World's Fair. This story included full view and cross-sectional drawings of the dome.

Below are two copies of Stackpole's dome design from the 1890 Blade. The micro-film copy of this Blade is of poor quality, but one can get the general idea of Stackpole's grand dome design.





It is extremely likely that William Stackpole knew John Virgin very well. Mr. Stackpole probably lobbied his friend John Virgin to pitch his dome idea to the fair planning commission.

Several of the buildings at the fair had dome designs. It is assumed the planning commission did not use Stackpole's dome design. They used the leading American architects from New York and Chicago to design the various buildings at the fair. The planning commission probably ignored ideas from relatively unknown people like William Stackpole.

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CHAPTER 12

Planning the Fair

The December 27, 1890, issue of the Blade noted, "John Virgin chose the site for the World's Fair and was made General superintendent for the Buildings and Grounds for the Illinois Exhibit."

The July 25, 1891, issue of the Blade noted, "John Virgin met with the construction committee of the Illinois World's Fair Commission in Chicago several days this week.."

The July 2, 1892, issue of the Blade noted, "Among those of our people at the World's Fair this week were Mr. T.A. Beach & Wife and Mrs. G.C. Lewis.

The fairgrounds were not open to the public until the fair opened May 1, 1893. It is likely that John Virgin gave Thomas Beach, his wife Ella, and their daughter Mrs. George Lewis a special tour of the fairgrounds under construction.

On October 21, 1892, dedication ceremonies for the fair were held. The fairgrounds were not actually opened to the public until May 1, 1893.

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CHAPTER 13

Emeline Disappears

In the summer of 1892, Dr. H.H. Holmes paid for his henchman, Benjamin Pitezel, to go to the Keeley Institute in Dwight and take the cure for alcoholism.

Pitezel knew that his boss, Dr. H.H. Holmes, really liked tall, blonde, and young women. While taking the treatment at the Keeley Institute, Pitezel met a young, tall, and voluptuous blonde woman named Emeline Cigrand.

When Pitezel finished the treatment and returned to Chicago, he brought back a description of Emeline Cigrand. She was (so Pitezel reported) a tall, shapely blonde whose beauty was a match for Julia Conner's, Holmes's last girl friend.

If anything, Emeline was even lovelier. After all, when Holmes had met his former mistress (Julia), she was already twenty-seven and twice a mother.

But Emeline Cigrand was pristine—a dewy twenty-four-year-old whose innocence was nearly as palpable as the perfume of a flower. A native of Lafayette, Indiana, Emeline had worked for a year as a stenographer at the Tippecanoe County Recorder's office. She then to work at Dwight in July, 1891.

She had been there for less than a year when Pitezel checked in. Captivated by her beauty, he struck up an acquaintance with the young woman and did his best to dazzle her with his importance. He represented himself as the partner of Dr. H. H. Holmes, one of Chicago's most prominent businessmen.

Emeline, who had never visited the great metropolis—indeed, had never been to a city bigger than Lafayette—was suitably impressed.

Back in Englewood, Pitezel rhapsodized about Emeline to Holmes, who wasted little time in luring the young woman to his Castle. Within a week of Pitezel's return, Holmes wrote

to Emeline, offering her a job. The job was to be his private secretary at a salary of $18 per week--a 50 percent increase over the wage Dr. Keeley was paying her.

In May 1892, the young woman bid farewell to her friends at Dwight and journeyed to Englewood. She then rented a room in a boardinghouse only a block away from the Castle. Holmes set about seducing her with his usual energy and determination. He bought her flowers, took her sight-seeing in the city, and treated her to pretty trinkets. These pretty trinkets included hair ribbons, a tortoiseshell comb, a cameo brooch—at Marshall Field's.

Soon, he was squiring her to the theater and springing for costly dinners at fashionable downtown restaurants. They spent Sunday afternoons strolling around Englewood or bicycling in the park. Emeline took to the new sport with such enthusiasm that Holmes presented her with her own Pope two-wheeler.

By the middle of the summer, she had become his mistress. Even a casual observer could see that (as one of the Castle's tenants later testified) "the relations between Holmes and Miss Cigrand were not strictly those of employer and employee."

Apart from such testimony, little is known about the details of their affair. Circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that, by early fall of 1892, she expected him to marry her. Indeed, he appears to have encouraged her to communicate the happy news to her relatives and friends.

However, he insisted—presumably for complicated legal reasons involving his divorce from Myrta—that she refer to him by an alias: Robert E. Phelps.

Throughout the fall, Emeline corresponded frequently with her friends back in Dwight. She gushed over her husband-to-be--his kindness and generosity, his wealth and position, his fine manners and gentlemanly ways.

For their honey-moon, he intended to take her to Europe. To her younger sister, Philomena Ida, Emeline confided that her intended was the son of an English lord, whom they planned to visit during their trip. Possibly, they might even settle permanently abroad.

Early in October 1892, Emeline's cousins, Dr. and Mrs. B. J. Cigrand, visited Chicago and, shortly after their arrival, paid a call on Emeline. Her fiancé was not present, but she spoke warmly of his virtues. Though considerably older than herself, he was, she insisted, a "fine gentleman," "very wealthy," who had treated her with unstinting kindness. To give them a sense of his accomplishments, she took them over to the Castle. She showed them the first-floor shops, and led them up to the main office on the third floor.

As it happened, Dr. Cigrand was not as impressed as Emeline had hoped. Indeed, he could not help noticing the poor construction evident throughout the interior. The winding staircase in particular struck him as a particularly shoddy piece of work, and he commented on the had lumber it had been built with. Emeline, though put out by his response, said nothing.

The wedding of Emeline Cigrand and H. H. Holmes—planned as a strictly private, civil ceremony—was scheduled for the first week in December. Sometime in early November, Holmes presented Emeline with a dozen white envelopes and asked her to address them

to her closest relatives and friends. He intended to have formal marriage announcements printed up, he explained, which he would mail out immediately after their wedding.

Emeline sat down at once and penned the addresses in her fine, flowing hand. She had no conceivable way of knowing, of course, the true purpose of Holmes's request, which did not become evident until much later. But in retrospect, its significance is clear.

By the time Holmes asked her to fill out the envelopes, he had already decided to kill her. Why did Holmes want Emeline Cigrand dead? Like Julia, she may well have known too many of his secrets, having served as his private secretary for over six months. There is also reason to think that Emeline had pressured Holmes into proposing by threatening to leave him. And Holmes was not a man who took kindly to threats. Perhaps Holmes's decision to do away with his young mistress signified nothing more than this: he simply felt the urge.

Sometime during the first week of December—probably on the sixth—Holmes, who was working in his office, called Emeline to his side and asked her to fetch a document from the walk-in vault next door. While Emeline searched for the papers in question, Holmes walked up to the vault, swung the heavy door shut, and spun the lock. Then he pulled up a chair, pressed his ear to the steel door, and listened intently as her shock turned to panic and, finally, to pure, ritual terror. He continued to listen to the terrorized young woman until she died of asphyxiation in the air-tight vault.

On December 17, 1892, Emeline's family friends received her handwritten envelopes in the mail. Inside, they found a card, printed with a simple inscription:

Mr. Robert Phelps

Miss Emeline Cigrand

Married Wednesday, December 7th 1892

Chicago

Emeline's hometown newspaper had already taken note of her good fortune. Ten days earlier, the paper had published the following item under the headline "Miss Cigrand Weds Robert E. Phelps": "The bride, after completing her education, was employed as a stenographer in the County Recorder's office. From there she went to Dwight, and from there to Chicago, where she met her fate. She is a lady of great intelligence and has a charming manner and a hand-some appearance. She is a lady of refinement and possesses a character that is strong and pure. Her many friends see that she has exercised good judgment in selecting a husband and will heartily congratulate her."

It is striking—and grimly ironic—that the writer of this notice chose the phrase "met her fate" to refer to Emeline Cigrand's fiancé, the fictitious Mr. Phelps. Emeline had indeed met her fate in Chicago, though not in the sense that the writer intended.

It is impossible to say whether the young woman was already dead by the time this newspaper announcement appeared, though the oxygen supply in the sealed vault must surely have run out by then—particularly given the high respiration rate induced by uncontrolled hysteria. As Holmes later indicated, from the moment the full horror of her situation finally sank in, Emeline's frenzied cries and continued for hours without letup.

In any event, Emeline Cigrand was never seen alive again. Not many weeks after her disappearance, the LaSalle Medical School became the owner of a new anatomical specimen: a fine female skeleton acquired from Dr. H. H. Holmes.

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CHAPTER 14

The Columbian Exposition of 1893

Duration of the Columbian Exposition

After three long years of planning and building, the 1893 Columbian Exposition opened to the public on May 1, 1893. The fair ran for six months until closing day October 31, 1893.

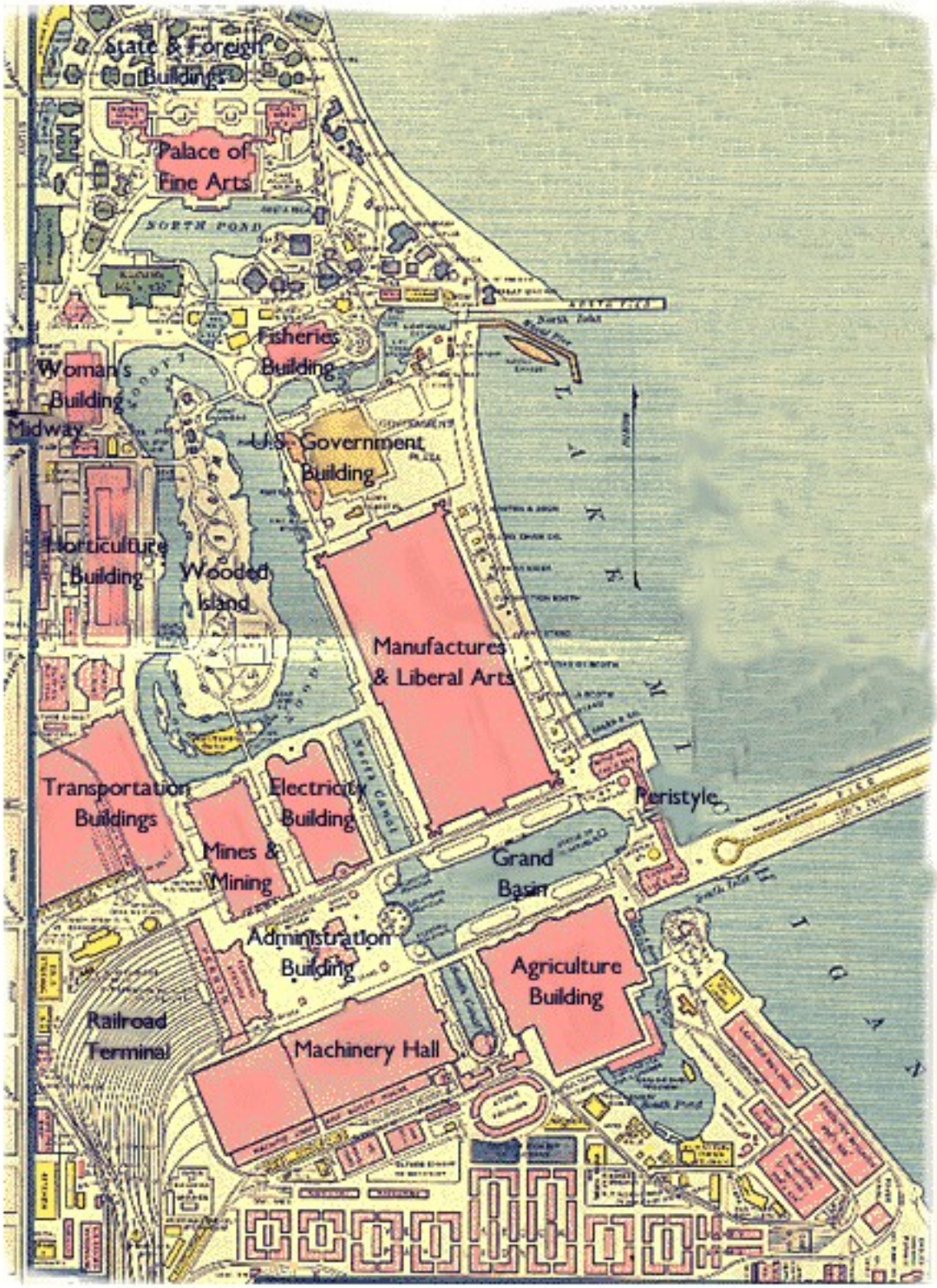
Because all of the buildings were painted white, the fair grounds quickly got the nickname, "The White City".

Tickets

A copy of a ticket to the World's Fair is shown below:

Map

A map of the Columbia Exposition is shown below:

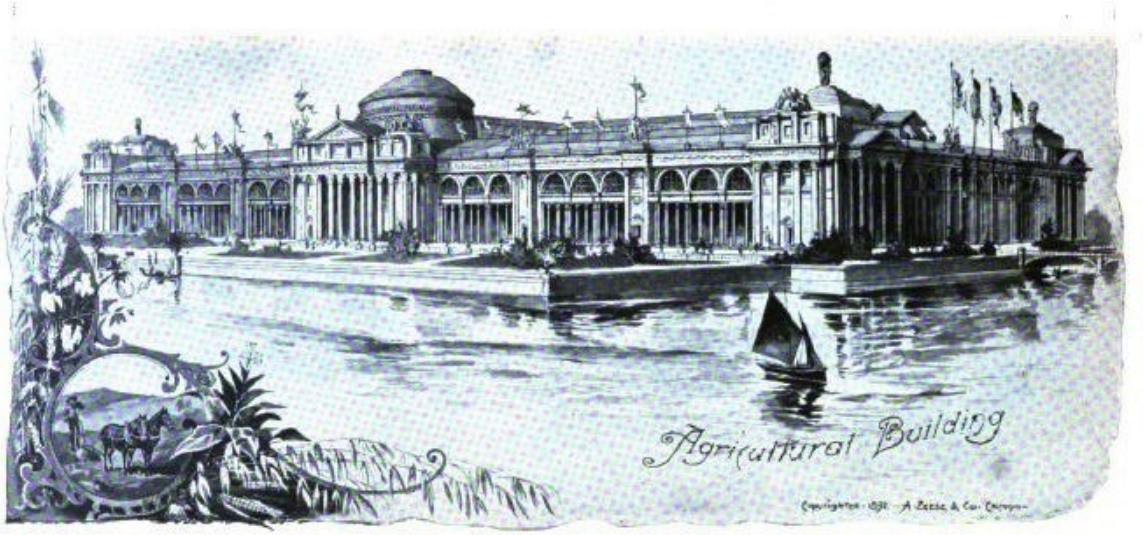

State & Foreign Buildings
Palace of Fine Arts
NORTH POAD
Fisheries Building
Woman's Building
Midway
U.S. Government Building
Horticulture Building
Wooded Island
Manufactures & Liberal Arts
Transportation Buildings
Electricity Building
Mines & Mining
Peristyle
Grand Basin
Administration Building
Agriculture Building
Railroad Terminal
Machinery Hall

Aerial View

Here is a colorized view of the Columbian Exposition of 1893:

John Virgin

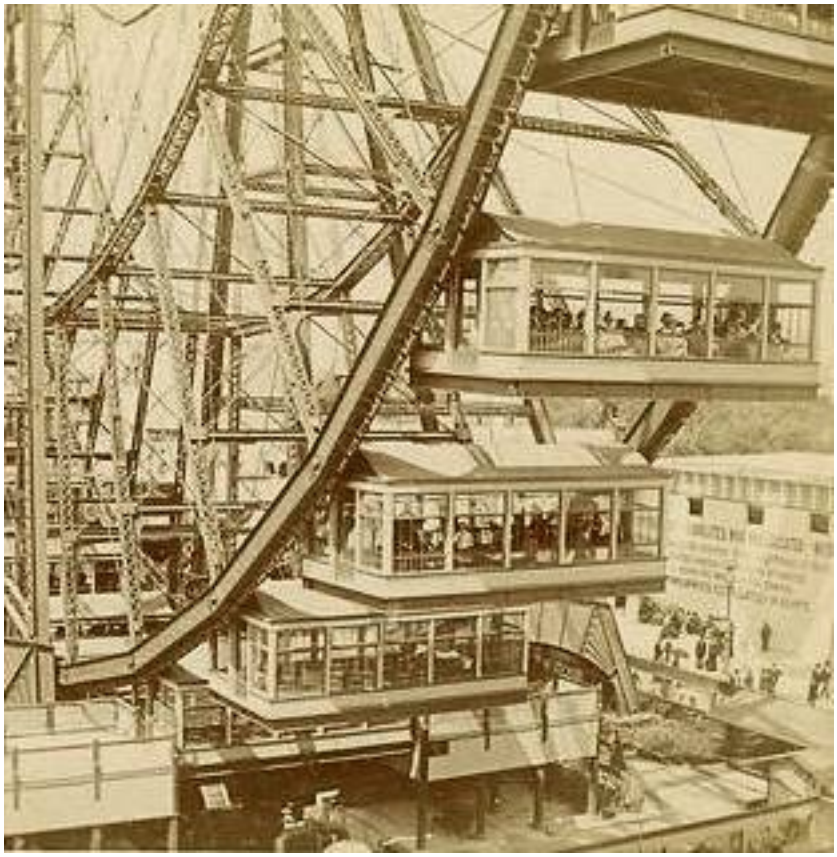
John Virgin helped to plan the Agricultural Building and its displays:



Ferris Wheel

The 1878 Paris International Exposition was famous for its 986 foot tall Eiffel Tower. The planners for the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition wanted something to rival and even exceed the French Eiffel Tower. They came up with the 264 feet tall Ferris Wheel for the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition.

THE FERRIS WHEEL
AT THE
WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION,
CHICAGO, 1893.



New Consumer Products

Many new consumer products were first introduced at the 1893 World's Fair. Manufacturers took the opportunity to have the 27 million fair visitors see their new products at the fair.

Historical researcher Jocelyn Mackie, posted an excellent review of these new consumer products.

Commemorative Stamps and Coins

In this century, commemorative stamps and coins are commonplace. Very few post office visits or glances into a change jar are without one, and you can blame the frenzy on the Chicago Fair. News of the Fair and America's excitement about it spread, and the U.S. Post Office jumped on that momentum with its first set of commemorative stamps they called the Columbians. Designed for collection and unusable for mailing, postmaster General John Wanamaker referred to them as "souvenir" stamps.

Commemorative coins arose from a similar fundraising idea. To celebrate the Fair's opening and Columbus' anniversary, the U.S. Mint issued a half-dollar with a profile picture of the explorer, predictably named the Columbian half-dollar. First sketches of the design generated controversy because historians and enthusiasts considered the picture inaccurate, but a portrait was eventually agreed on.

Wrigley Chewing Gum

Chewing gum wasn't a new invention, but it wasn't yet being mass-produced. William Wrigley, Jr., a soap and baking powder salesman, handed out gum to his customers as an incentive to buy his products. He discovered the candy was more popular than his wares, so he started mass-producing chewing gum in 1892. Juicy Fruit was the first featured flavor — Wrigley revealed it to enthusiastic Fair attendees right before introducing Wrigley's Spearmint. More than 100 years later, Juicy Fruit remains the favorite brand of chewing gum in the United States and is sold all over the world.

Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer

The punch line of every beer snob joke started from humble beginnings in 1844, but it didn't become a blue ribbon favorite until it hit the national stage at the Fair. German immigrant Jacob Best started brewing the well-known lager under the name Empire Brewery in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It became Phillip Best Company after his son took it over, and later it became Pabst Brewing Company in 1889.

The signature beer of Pabst, Best Select, won ribbons at local and state fairs, but company president Gustave Pabst had greater ambitions. He entered the Best Select in the Fair's brewing competition, where it won yet another blue ribbon. From that point the name changed to Pabst Blue Ribbon, and the brew for the budget-wary has stayed in popular culture ever since.

Aunt Jemima Pancakes

Drenched in overtones unacceptable by today's standards, the original Aunt Jemima was Nancy Green, a slave born on November 11, 1817. Chris Rutt and Charles Underwood were owners of Pearl Milling Company and developed a packaged self-rising pancake flour. He named it Aunt Jemima after a black-face character in a vaudeville show who sang a tune by the same name. Lacking business sense as well as racial sensitivity, Rutt and Underwood were out of business and broke by 1890. They sold the formula to R.T. Davis Milling Company. Needing assistance to market the new product, they discovered Nancy Green and hired her to play Aunt Jemima.

Green and the pancake mix made their debut at the Fair, where she produced instant pancakes for public enjoyment. Between warm food and an even warmer nature, Green was a hit with the public. Police officers had to control foot traffic to keep people from loitering at the booth. At the conclusion of the Fair R.T. Davis Milling Company received 50,000 orders, and Green received a lifetime contract. Aunt Jemima products are now part of Quaker Oats and the company updated her image in 1989 to help her appear less like a stereotypical African-American housekeeper and more like a middle-class homemaker.

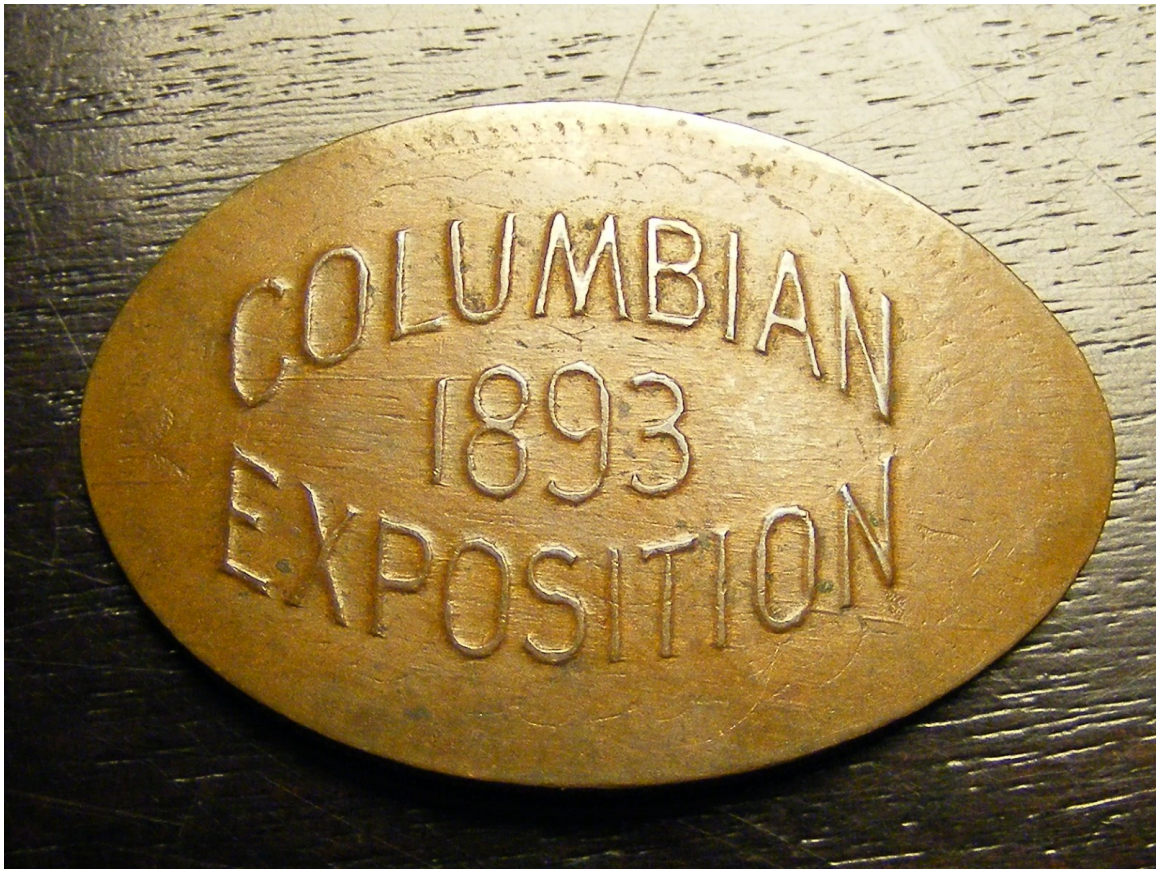
Cracker Jacks

Before it was a staple at baseball games, Cracker Jack started as a mix of popcorn, peanuts and molasses that supposedly debuted at the Fair. Unfortunately, there's not much solid information on how or why this snack was invented. Lewis and Frederick William, aka F.W. Rueckheim, invented the treat but not the name — that was attributed to an unknown Frito-Lay sales representative. Seeing an opportunity, the pair marketed it at the Fair to good results, keeping the brand in the American mainstay ever since. At least, that's the story told by its manufacturer — there's actually no hard evidence it was sold at the Fair, so this may very well be a myth. But true or not, the story has become a key part of Cracker Jack's place in American pop culture. It's a better way to be remembered than its other claim to fame — some historians argue that Cracker Jack was the world's first junk food.

Squashed Pennies

You'd be hard-pressed to visit a tourist trap without seeing the squashed penny machine. For a total of 51 cents, you can flatten a penny into a decorated token as proof of your adventures.

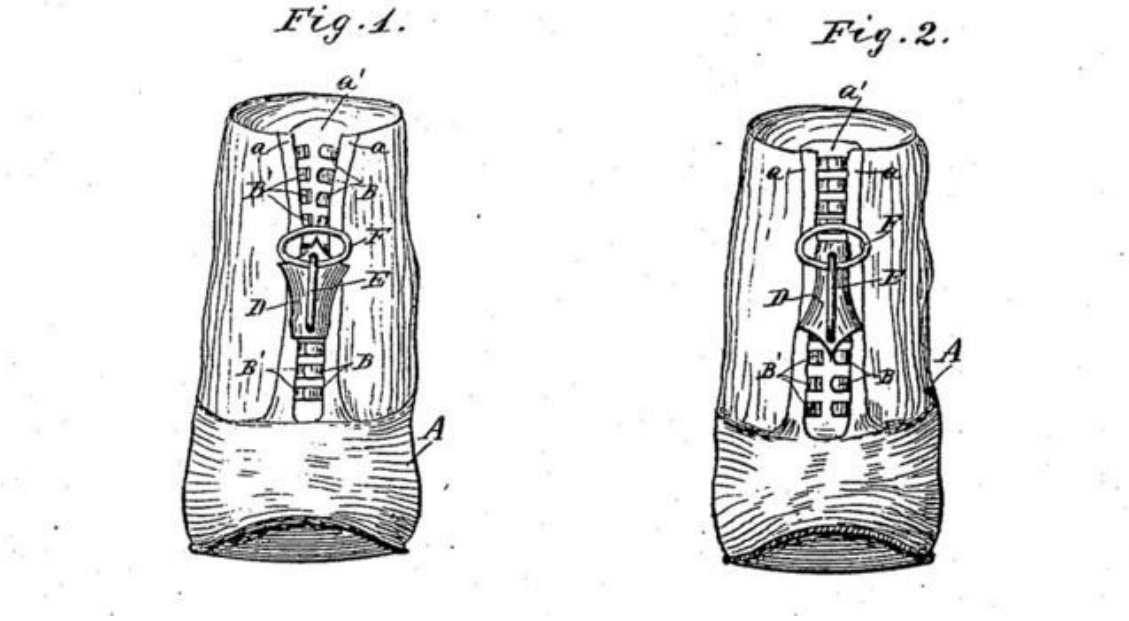
These handy money collectors started their careers at the 1893 Fair. Those squashed pennies were simpler, with only raised letters stating "Columbian Exposition 1893." Each machine had seven different designs for the lettering so tourists could pick their favorite and treasure an elongated coin for the ages.



The Zipper

Until you dabble in historical reenactment and deal with corset lacings, hooks and loops, you may not quite appreciate the invention of the zipper. Now so commonplace as to be taken for granted, the zipper started out as a Fair novelty. Elias Howe, sewing machine innovator, started playing with the zipper concept in 1851, patenting it as the "Automatic, Continuous Clothing Closure." However, he was more fascinated with his sewing machine, so he neglected the zipper.

It took 44 years before Whitcomb Judson discovered and developed Howe's zipper concept. He invented the "clasp locker" with Colonel Lewis Walker and started the Universal Fastener Company. The two decided to introduce the device at the Fair, but it wasn't successful. However, the brave debut allowed the concept to receive notoriety and development. After studying the clasping technology Gideon Sundback, an electrical engineer at the Universal Fastener Company, started improving the design until it became our modern day zipper in 1913.



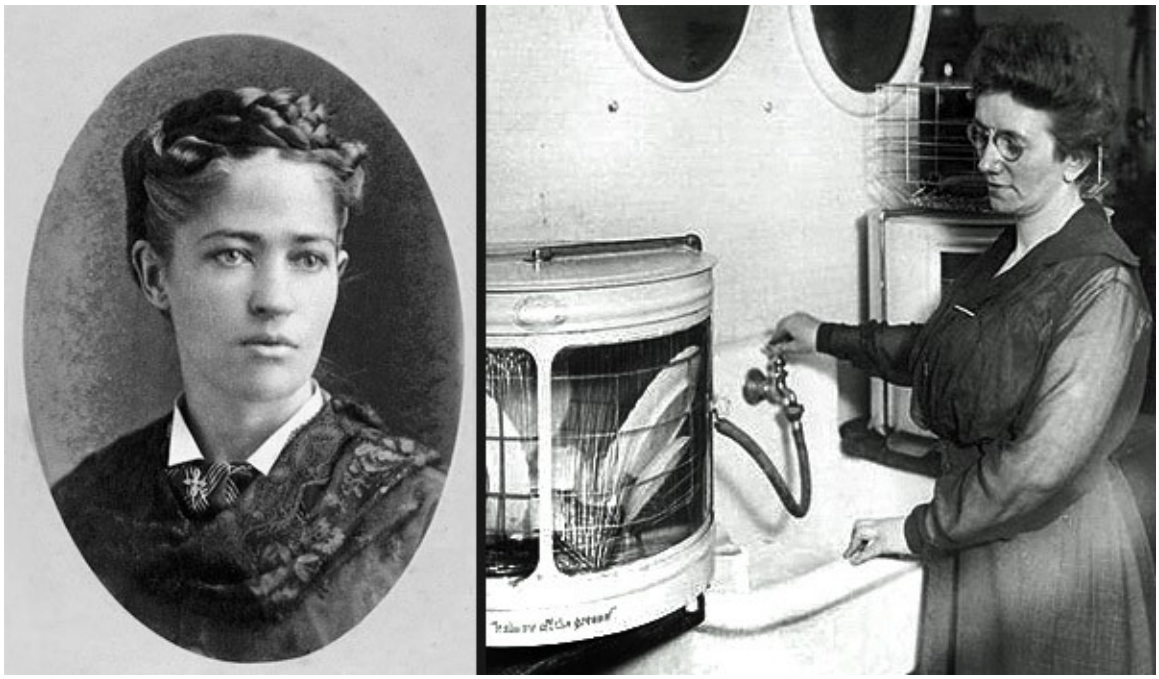
Spray Paint

Spray paint wasn't an exhibit at the Fair, but unbeknown to everyone who attended they could see it on display daily. Even as the Fair started, several buildings remained under construction. The ones that were ready for visitors needed to shine, and fast. To hasten this effort, artist Francis Davis Millet developed a way to spray exterior paint on the buildings to cut back on preparation time. The aerosol sprayer we're familiar with wouldn't be invented until 1949, but do-it-yourself home improvers and graffiti artists can thank the Fair for planting the seed for their favorite tool.

Dishwashers

Today we argue over how to load it and who gets to empty it. But in 1893 the dishwasher, part of a fully-electric kitchen Fair display, was the stuff of dreams.

Inventor Josephine Cochrane filed the patent on her dishwashing machine on December 31, 1885. She explained it as a system of baskets and levers that would splash soapy water on dishes. Although she continued to develop the concept for the next four years, she wouldn't get a chance to demonstrate it until it appeared at the Fair. Her company gained momentum, later became KitchenAid, and continued producing appliances for the modern kitchen.



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CHAPTER 15

Fairbury Visitors to The Columbian Exposition of 1893

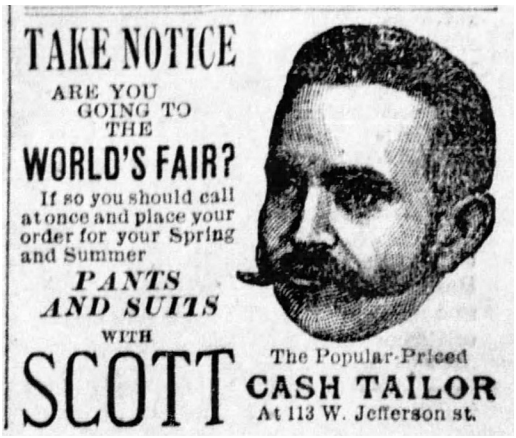
Advertisements

Fairbury residents saw many newspaper advertisements promoting the 1893 World's Fair. These ads appeared in the Fairbury Blade as well as the Bloomington Pantagraph.

The June 20, 1893, Pantagraph had an ad from the Chicago & Alton Railroad for people to ride the train to the World's Fair in Chicago.

This same ad ran in the Fairbury Blade as well.

Many merchants tried to capitalize on the popularity of the World's Fair by running ads with a World's Fair theme. The June 20, 1893, Pantagraph issue had one of these typical ads:



The women's organizations of the Chicago area also tried to warn young women to be careful in Chicago while visiting the World's Fair. Their advertisement ran in many newspapers around the country, including the Fairbury Blade.

WARNING TO WOMAN

"We, the undersigned societies of Chicago, give this warning to young women who may visit the city daring the World's Fair. Beware of advertisements of "Light work and good wages." Beware of those seeking your acquaintance in the cars, depots, or streets. Beware of invitations to suppers, theaters or any places of amusement.

Thousands of young woman are wanted for immoral purposes, and we know that hospitals, boarding houses, employment agencies, work shops, and even schools are canvassed by respectable looking people who are seeking victims.

Reliable information about lodging and work will be furnished free by mail or at the office of the Protective Agency for women and children, Room 232, Opera House building, daily except Sunday, from 9 to 5 or from any of the societies given below.

Reliable information always given by the janitress of the ladies waiting room in each depot in Chicago. Protective agency for women and children, Chicago opera house building. Young women's Christian association, room 64, 243 Wabash Avenue. Women's working home, 31 5 Peoria St. Home of the friendless, 1926 Wabash Avenue. Anchorage Mission, W. C. T. U. 126 Plymouth place. Central W. C. T. U.-- The Temple. Chicago Women's club; Illinois Women's Alliances Children's Aid Society; Deaconess' Home; South Division Christian Endeavor, The Kings Daughters; Epworth League; Chicago Relief and Aid Society; Illinois Humane Society.

Published July 15, 1893.

Fairbury Visitors to the Fair

According to the July 15, 1893, Blade newspaper, Dr. E.C. Lewis and family of Tuscarora Co., Ohio, spent several days here this week and last, visiting his brothers Dr. G.C. and Mr. J.E. Lewis. The Doctor and his family had just returned from several weeks sight seeing at the World's Fair.

According to the September 30, 1893, Blade newspaper, Mr. and Mrs. A.F. Filley and daughter, Miss Ruth, were in Chicago attending the fair.

It is likely the Fairbury Blade noted many other citizens who attended the World's Fair. The microfilm of the 1893 Fairbury Blade at the Dominy Memorial Library is very difficult to read. The microfilm printer is broken and can not be repaired. The author stopped searching for additional citizens who attended the World's Fair because of these technical difficulties.

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CHAPTER 16

The Columbian Exposition of 1893 After-Math

Fair Grounds

Almost all of the fair's structures were designed to be temporary. Of the more than 200 buildings erected for the fair, the only two still stand in place. These are the Palace of Fine Arts and the World's Congress Auxiliary Building.

From the time the fair closed until 1920, the Palace of Fine Arts housed the Field Columbian Museum. This is now the Field Museum of Natural History, since relocated. In 1933, the Palace building re-opened as the Museum of Science and Industry.

The second building, the World's Congress Building, was one of the few buildings not built in Jackson Park, instead it was built downtown in Grant Park. The cost of construction of the World's Congress Building was shared with the Art Institute of Chicago. Per their plan, they moved into the building (the museum's current home) after the close of the fair.

Three other significant buildings survived the fair. The first is the Norway pavilion, a recreation of a traditional wooden stave church. This is now preserved at a museum called Little Norway in Blue Mounds, Wisconsin. The second is the Maine State Building, designed by Charles Sumner Frost, which was purchased by the Ricker family of Poland Spring, Maine. They moved the building to their resort to serve as a library and art gallery. The Poland Spring Preservation Society now owns the building, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. The third is the Dutch House, which was moved to Brookline, Massachusetts.

The main altar at St. John Cantius in Chicago, as well as its matching two side altars, are reputed to be from the Columbian Exposition.

The waterway and island by what is now the Museum of Science and Industry was converted to the Japanese Botanical Garden.

Since many of the other buildings at the fair were intended to be temporary, they were removed after the fair. Their facades were made not of stone, but of a mixture of plaster, cement, and jute fiber called staff. This staff was painted white, giving the buildings their "gleam". Architecture critics derided the structures as "decorated sheds". The White City, however, so impressed everyone who saw it (at least before air pollution began to darken the façades) that plans were considered to refinish the exteriors in marble or some other material. In any case, these plans were abandoned in July 1894 when much of the fair grounds was destroyed in a fire, thus assuring their temporary status.

Ferris Wheel

The Ferris Wheel first opened to the public as the centerpiece of the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago on June 21, 1893. It continued to operate there until after the exposition ended in October 1893.

The wheel itself closed in April 1894. It was then dismantled and stored until the following year, when it was rebuilt in the Lincoln Park, Chicago, neighborhood. The amusement park was located at 2619 to 2665 N. Clark, which is now the location of a McDonald's and a high-rise residential building.

The original plan was to include a beer garden and vaudeville show, but the liquor license was not granted. William D. Boyce, then a local resident, filed a Circuit Court action against the owners of the wheel to have it removed, but without success. It operated there from October 1895 until 1903, when it was bought by the Chicago House Wrecking Company for $8,150.00.

It was then dismantled for a second time and transported by rail to St. Louis for the 1904 World's Fair, where it earned its owners $215,000. It was finally destroyed by controlled demolition using dynamite on May 11, 1906.

Dr. H.H. Holmes

About the time the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition ended in October, Holmes decided it was time to flee Chicago. Many creditors were after him for bills incurred when he built his Murder Castle. The relatives of the two hundred people that he killed were also demanding the Chicago Police investigate their disappearances.

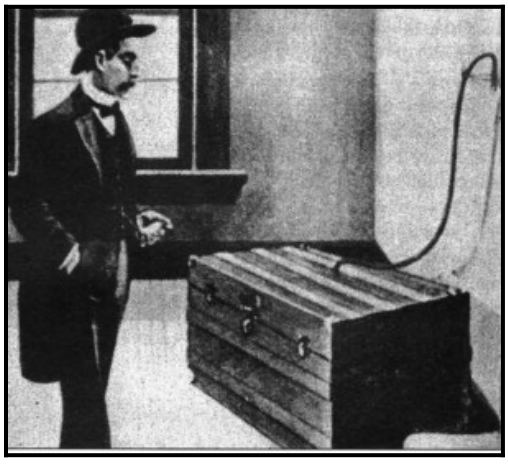
Before Holmes fled Chicago, he intentionally burned the upper story of his Murder Castle in an attempt to collect on the property insurance. The insurance company thought something was fishy about the claim, and refused to pay it.

After Holmes fled Chicago, he convinced his henchman, Benjamin Pitezel, to participate in another insurance fraud scheme. Holmes would find a body similar to Pitezel's, burn it, then claim the life insurance money. Unfortunately for Pitezel, Holmes instead simply killed Pitezel.

By this point, an unrelenting police detective starting investigating Holmes. This unrelenting detective was Frank Geyer from Philadelphia.

Holmes moved from city to city, taking three of Pitezel's young children with him. Holmes eventually murdered the little boy and his two sisters.

Holmes murdered the two little sisters by locking them in a trunk. He then piped natural gas into the trunk through a small hole drilled in the trunk.



Detective Geyer finally arrested Holmes and charged him with the murder of his partner. Holmes was sentenced to death by hanging.

Holmes was executed On May 7, 1896. Holmes was hanged at Moyamensing Prison, also known as the Philadelphia County Prison, for the murder of Benjamin Pitezel. Until the moment of his death, Holmes remained calm and amiable, showing very few signs of fear, anxiety or depression.

Although showing little signs of fear and anxiety, he asked for his coffin to be contained in cement and buried ten feet deep. The reason being because he was concerned grave robbers would steal his body and use it for dissection.

Holmes' neck did not snap; he instead was strangled to death slowly. He twitched for over 15 minutes before being pronounced dead 20 minutes after the trap had been sprung. He is buried in an un-marked grave with 10 feet of concrete on top of his coffin.

"I was born with the devil in me. I could not help the fact that I was a murderer, no more than the poet can help the inspiration to sing — I was born with the "Evil One" standing as my sponsor beside the bed where I was ushered into the world, and he has been with me since."

– H. H. Holmes

Emeline Cigarand

Emiline's body was never found. The Chicago Police investigated and tried to track her skeleton to the medical college it was sold to. Their only witness was very unreliable, and they had no DNA analysis available to positively link a skeleton to Emiline.

Emeline's distraught friends and parents tried using a psychic in August of 1895 to communicate with their dead daughter. This was reported in the August 1, 1895, Chicago Tribune.

TO TALK WITH EMELINE'S SPIRIT

Mediums in Indiana Try to Reach the Dead Girl

Anderson, Ind., July 31, 1895. The friends of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Cigrand, whose daughter Emeline is believed to have been one of H.H. Holmes' victims, are much interested in the attempt by spiritualist séances to communicate with the spirit of Emeline. A number of people here had private settings with mediums, but as they report no satisfaction a woman whose name must be withheld went into a séance for the spirit of Emeline.

After sitting in a dark room for nearly two hours she says there was a voice in the trumpet and she understood it to say:

"This is Emma. I went into the spirit land two years ago and was far from home. O, it was so horrible." Here the words became whispers and were not audible. But suddenly another voice said:

"I hope sister will soon join me. I have something awful to tell her. My husband is still beyond the spirit land. I send love to mamma and pappa, and tell them to--" and here the spirit stopped and could not be called again.

Mrs. Hibbeth Scery, one of the best of Indianapolis mediums, was seen by the correspondent for The Tribune at her home in Muncie tonight. She would not attempt to call up the spirit of Emeline Cigrand, for she said it was absurd.

"The laws of nature are the government of all mediums and spirits." said the medium. "The dead girl would have to be well known to any one speaking who should have talked with the girl in worldly life shortly before her death. Natural responses are against me, for should one spirit be called and told to hunt for the spirit of the girl it would not know the spirit. Should she call into circumstances attending her death and reported it would affect the spiritual condition."

A trance medium attempted to talk with the girl's spirit. He assumed a trance state and speaking for a spirit said: "All seems dark, no light anywhere, come, come quick; I cannot be here long, O, had I known this."

Here the medium came out of the trance. He promises to make another effort.

The mother of the Cigrand girl said she believed some of the spirits talking were those of her daughter, and will attend a séance as soon as one can be arranged for her.

Today Kankakee relatives of Emeline Cigrand wrote to ask how she and her husband Phelps were getting along. They knew not of her disappearance. Mrs. Henderson of Indianapolis has been called home by detectives who want her evidence about Holmes while he was in Indianapolis.

Philadelphia, PA., July 31---Special--In an interview today Holmes said the Cigrand woman was alive and in a convent. The story he told of the affair was that the girl told a priest about her troubles and he called upon Holmes and raised a row about it. As a result of this, Holmes says he took the girl off and a mock marriage was held. Afterward Miss Cigrand discovered how she had been duped and entered a convent.

Holmes later confessed that he had murdered Emeline Cigrand.

Police investigated the Murder Castle that Holmes built. In the air-tight vault that Emeline was suffocated in, they found a woman's foot prints on the inside of the door. The footprints had been permanently etched into the door's surface. Police speculated that before Holmes had Emeline enter the air-tight vault, he poured acid on the floor of the vault. The acid would consume some of the oxygen in the vault. After poor Emeline was locked in the vault, she must have sat on the floor and put her acid coated feet against the vault door.

John Virgin

John Virgin only lived seven more years after the 1893 Columbian Exposition. He died November 20, 1900.

His wife, Serepta Jane McDowell, lived to be 93 years old and died July 9, 1935.

Alma Lewis James, in her Nicks from the Blade papers, reported that John Virgin was just a good natured farmer boy, who had made good in a big way, but Mrs. Virgin had other ideas, and they lived up their money just as fast as he made it, so that when he died they had only a few acres of land.

The last few years of Virgin's life were not at all happy. His wife fell on the ice and broke her hip. She was an invalid for some time, and took up Christian Science. She had nothing to do with her old friends in the Methodist Church, and John, who thoroughly enjoyed the social life of the church, missed his old friends sorely. She had a very elaborate boudoir, and spent most of her time there, turning the rest of the house over to the girls. She was also sometimes guilty of trying to high hat her friends and neighbors, and the Filleys enjoyed "taking her down a notch".

The Virgin's had four daughters: Georgia was a year older than Grandmother, and died at twelve or thirteen of diphtheria. Minnie Virgin married Al Cooley. Then there was Alto, and Daisy was the youngest.

John Virgin had a big bus with seats running down each side that held his own family, the Filleys and the Wades. He would hitch a pair of stallions to it and take the crowd on picnics along the river, maybe at Oakdale Farm. They usually stopped and got the Fugates, because Grandmother Fugate was such a good hand at frying fish. The men seined for fish.

Virgin spent his whole life involved with the importation and selling of horses. Little did he know that only a couple of years after his death, horses would quickly be replaced by automobiles and tractors on the farm.

John Virgin is buried on the west side of the Fairbury cemetery:

AUG. 10, 1838.
NOV. 20, 1900.
VIRGIN

John Virgin's obituary in the Fairbury Blade is one of the longest obituaries ever printed in the Blade's history. A copy of this obituary is below:

JOHN VIRGIN DEAD

Suddenly Called While Attending a Meeting of the National French Draft Horse Association

Funeral Services in the City Today

Word was received here Tuesday evening of the death of John Virgin. Although he had been in poor health for some time past, his death was not expected and caused a shock to the community.

Mr. Virgin was presiding over a meeting of the National French Draft Horse Association which was being held at the Sherman House, Chicago, he being vice-president of that organization. Heart failure, supposed to have been brought on by the excitement of the debate on one of the questions before the meeting, was the immediate cause of his death.

The debate had just closed when he was taken ill and ask to be excused, and was assisted to a room in the hotel and physicians summoned. Their efforts were unavailing, however, and he passed away a half-hour later.

During his absence, the association had elected him vice-president and the members were cheering his election when the word was brought that he was dead.

Mr. Virgin was born in the Carroll County, Indiana, August 10, 1838. In 1854, he came with his parents to Illinois settling in Eppards Point township, where he lived on the farm until 1870 when he moved to Fairbury.

January 26, 1865, he was united in marriage to Serepta J. McDowell. Four children were born to them, two of whom, Mrs. A. Cooley, and Miss Daisy, together with the bereaved wife survive him.

The family moved to Chicago in 1896, Mr. Virgin being appointed to purchasing agent for the Garfield Park stables by Governor Tanner, which position he was filling at the time of his death.

He was a veteran of the War of Rebellion, enlisting as a member of Company K. 3d Illinois Cavalry, which started from this city August 7, 1861, and served for three years, being promoted to Orderly Sergeant in which capacity he acted in nearly three years.

Few men have taken as active and prominent part in the political and business affairs of this state as Mr. Virgin. He was a prominent member of the State Board of Agriculture and Chairman of the Special Committee which drafted the plans for the Illinois State building at the World's Fair and a director of the agricultural display at the fair.

He was a pioneer breeder of French draft horses and the first one to introduce that breed in Livingston County, following the importing business many years. He served as general superintendent of the State Fair and the fat stock show. He always took an active part in the affairs of his home town and was one of the prime movers in organizing the Fairbury Fair, serving as President of the association several terms. A staunch Republican, taking an active interest in the affairs of his party until his death.

Mr. Virgin was a man whom even his enemies admired. Active and aggressive in pushing forward all things which he had to do, and even his declining years and his continued ill health failed to break his vigorous spirit. His influence was always for the good and he will be missed and mourned by all whom he came into contact.

He was a charter member of Post No. 75 and according to his request during life he was laid to rest under their auspices. The pall bearers were all the members of his old company and were: Thomas Day, George Lynn, A.F. Filley, John Zimmerman, J.W. Hoover, Pontiac: T.M Thornton, Saunemin: G.B. Brownson, T.F. Baker.

The honorary pall bearers were John Kring, Palsey Clary, Capt. Baker, R.C. Straight, Joel Strawn, Ed Hodgson, E.S. Fucsman, Horace Babcock.

The funeral services were held this afternoon from the M.E. Church of which he had been a member for over twenty years. Rev. M.A. Head preached the sermon. The church was crowded with his old friends and neighbors in this city and prominent people with whom he had been identified from various parts of the state. The remains were laid to rest in the Fairbury cemetery.

Geo. H. Madden of Mendota and D.W. Vittum of Canton, Illinois, attended Mr. Virgin's funeral. Mr. Madden represented the State Board of Agriculture and Mr. Vittum the French Draft Horse Association.

William Stackpole

William Stackpole died April 4, 1893, just three weeks before the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition opened May 1, 1893.

Mr. Stackpole was an eternal optimist and entrepreneur.

He was very creative and was issued one U.S. patent for dredging equipment. Back when he applied for his patent, you also had to submit a model of your invention to the Patent Office. Apparently two models of his invention were made. One went to the patent office, and the other ended up in 1954 at the Thomas Beach "Lion" house on Hickory Street in Fairbury. The current location of this model is unknown.

It was said that during his lifetime, he made and lost three fortunes. His widow and surviving daughter lived in poverty in Fairbury during their last years.

Alma Lewis James noted that Anna Stackpole was the daughter of William Stackpole and a very good friend of Ella Beach. She never married, and because her father had put nearly everything he owned into the Canal, now known as the Chicago, she lived and died in poverty.

The Stackpole family lived in Anchor, Illinois, before they moved to Fairbury. In March of 1979, the home they built in Anchor burned down. The Bloomington Pantagraph covered this story and it was titled ***Anchor Landmark Destroyed***.

ANCHOR—A local landmark was burned to the ground Friday night in a fire that lit the sky for miles around. The William Stackpole home, built in 1855 and now owned by the Don Mizell family, was ignited possibly by faulty wiring in the upper floors, according to Anchor Fire Chief Lee Klintworth.

No one was injured. Klintworth said the alarm was turned in about 7:30 p.m. by Larry Sutter, Cooksville, who was driving by the home, about 5 miles south of Anchor. The Mizell family was not at home when the fire began, he said.

The Stackpole home was originally a three-story structure, topped by a cupola. A lantern was placed in the cupola so travelers could find their way home. The house has been reported to be haunted, and among the eerie stories circulating is that a corpse was buried in a chimney in the home.

There is said to be a tunnel connecting the home and a barn but the Mizells have said they never searched for it. The barn was razed in 1975.

Stackpole's story is one of riches to rags. He returned from the goldfields of California in the early 1850s and established a grain and produce business. In 1852, he opened a coal mine and improved a fruit farm of 3,000 trees, now known as Orchard Mines near Pekin.

He began farming in Anchor Township in 1855 and was the first to break the prairie with horses rather than oxen and the first to bring a reaper. A series of business reverses in Pekin, losses in wheat crops and the war in 1861 resulted in his land being mortgaged at a great loss. By 1863, he was left penniless. The family moved to Fairbury, where they lived as hermits. They are buried in Fairbury in unmarked graves.

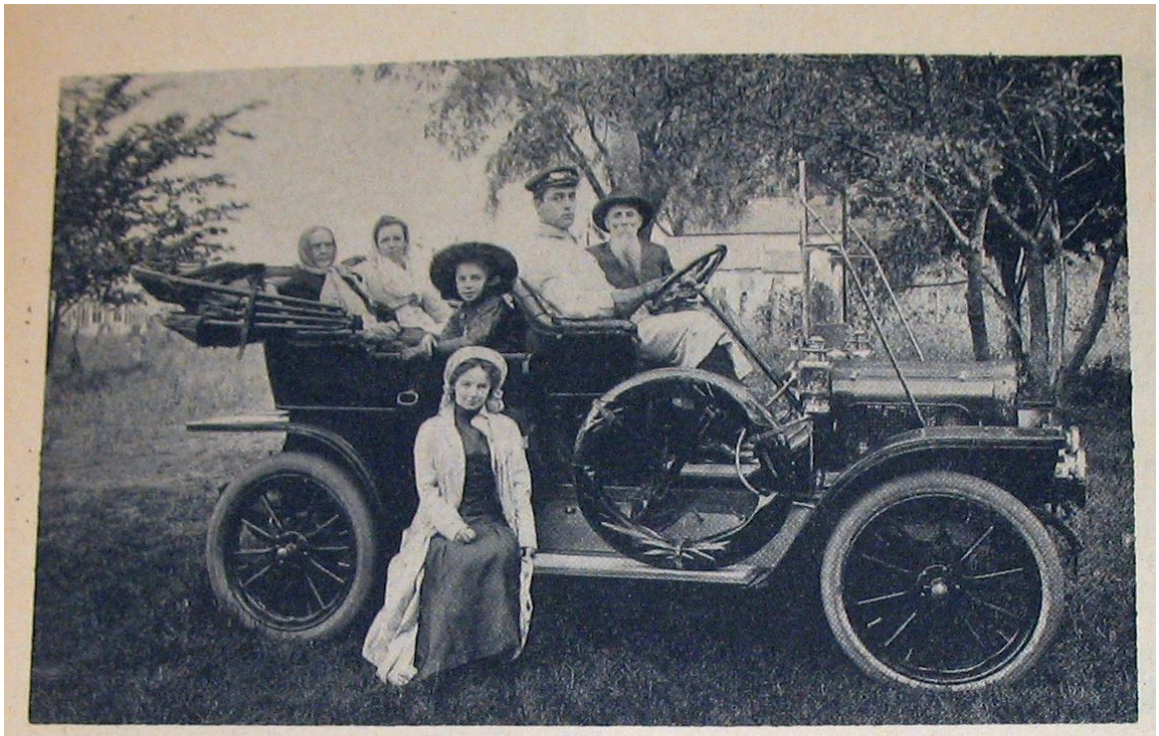
William Stackpole home in 1976

The Stackpole's Fairbury home by Marsh Park is still standing as of 2015.

Thomas A. Beach

Thomas A. Beach died at age 83, about 18 years after the 1893 Columbia Exposition.

Below is an old photo of Thomas A. Beach with some of his family in his car circa 1908:



AUTHOR ALMA LEWIS-JAMES was about seven or eight years old when her family was snapped by a local photographer in their new White Steamer (above).

Sitting in the touring car are, from the left, her grandmother, Mrs. T. A. Beach; her mother, Mrs. G. C. Lewis, wife of a local physician, the author; Nelson Cottingham, young local man who drove the White Steamer; and her grandfather, T. A. Beach, who founded the local bank. Perched on the running board is her sister, Mamie, who later became Mrs. Walter Ficklin, mother of Robert Ficklin.

Mrs. James, now a trifle camera-shy, recalls that she deliberately positioned her hands gracefully for this photo, as she had just received her first pair of kid gloves and wanted them shown to best advantage.

Young Cottingham was sent to the factory to learn how to operate her grandfather's car, as it was a quite complex mechanism. She says that he needed at least a half hour notice before the car was to be used, for it took that long to get up the steam.

The house in the background stood where the Neale Hanley home is now located on Hickory street.

The Beach "Lion" house on Hickory Street in Fairbury was refurbished in the 1980's. It remains in excellent condition.

It is estimated that Thomas A. Beach was worth approximately $50 million in 2015 dollars. He is the richest man to ever live in Fairbury, Illinois.

Dr. George Lewis and Wife Ella Beach Lewis

Dr. Lewis lived to be 76 years old and died February 11, 1932. His wife Ella died in 1939.

Dr. Lewis practiced medicine many years in Fairbury and delivered close to 1,000 babies.

Dr. Lewis and his wife were very generous. They donated $100,000 in 1926 to Wesleyan University. This is equivalent to $1.323 million in 2015 dollars. They also made donations to improve Fairbury.

The Lewis's youngest daughter, Alma Eloise Lewis, married Percy James. One of Alma Lewis James's hobbies was Fairbury history. She published many stories on Fairbury history, including the 1968 book titled ***Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars***.

Alma Lewis James died in March of 1979.

Copies of her book, ***Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars*** can still be purchased at the Fairbury Echoes Museum on Main Street.

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CHAPTER 17

Conclusion

The little farm town of Fairbury, Illinois, played a role in the very successful 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. One of Fairbury's prominent citizens, John Virgin, was named as one of the fair's managers. He helped to design the Agricultural Building and its exhibits at the fair.

William Stackpole, another prominent citizen of Fairbury, tried to offer his ideas for an elaborate dome at the fair.

Many Fairbury citizens visited the 1893 Columbian Exposition. These included Thomas A. Beach, the wealthiest man to ever live in Fairbury.

It was reported that Doctor George Lewis and his family visited the Columbian Exposition. It is very fortunate for the Doctor and the City of Fairbury that they did not stay over-night in Holmes's Murder Castle.

Over the years, many Fairbury citizens worked at the Keeley Institute in Dwight. One of the Keeley Institute employees, 24 year old Emeline Cigrand, was lured to Chicago to work for America's first mass serial killer, Dr. H.H. Holmes. He eventually murdered her.

Many visitors to the 1893 Columbian Exposition stayed at Dr. Holmes hotel, and he murdered many of his visitors. It is possible Dr. Holmes killed up to 200 people during his lifetime.

Fortunately, to the author's knowledge, no Fairbury citizens came up missing from the fair. It is interesting to speculate if any of Fairbury's citizens spent the night at Dr. Holmes hotel while visiting the 1893 Columbian Exposition.

Some of the consumer products developed for the 1893 Columbian Exposition are still with us today. These include Cracker Jacks, Cream of Wheat, Hershey Bars, Juicy Fruit gum, Quaker Oats, Shredded Wheat, Pabst Blue Ribbon beer, and Aunt Jemima's pancakes.

As a result of the Ferris Wheel operated at the 1893 Columbian Exposition, every small town fair today is not complete unless it has a Ferris Wheel.

If you are interested in learning more about America's first mass serial killer, Dr. H.H. Holmes, the two book recommended below contain detailed information about his depraved life.

If you are interested in learning more about Fairbury's history, you can read Alma Lewis James' book ***Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars***. You can also read the author's short story titled ***Fairbury, Illinois in 1888***. You can also visit the web site of the Fairbury Echoes Museum at http://www.historicfairbury.com.

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References

Nicks from the Blade compiled by Alma Lewis James in 1946.

Depraved: The Definitive True Story of H.H. Holmes, Whose Grotesque Crimes Shattered Turn-of-the-Century Chicago by Harold Schechter.

The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America by Erik Larson.

The White City by John Moses and Paul Selby, published 1893.

The Chicago Tribune

The Fairbury Blade

Wikipedia.org

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Recommended Reading

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Depraved: The Definitive True Story of H.H. Holmes, Whose Grotesque Crimes Shattered Turn-of-the-Century Chicago by Harold Schechter.

The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America by Erik Larson.

The White City by John Moses and Paul Selby, published 1893.

The Holmes-Pitezel Case: HISTORY OF THE Greatest Crime of the Century AND OF THE SEARCH FOR THE MISSING PITEZEL CHILDREN BY DETECTIVE FRANK P. GEYER OF THE BUREAU OF POLICE, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, A TRUE DETECTIVE^ STORY. By permission of the District Attorney and Mayor of the City of Philadelphia. FULLY

ILLUSTRATED. PUBLISHERS' UNION, 1896. (Note: This book can be downloaded in digital format for free)

The Chicago Tribune

The Fairbury Blade

Wikipedia.org

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Web Sites

http://www.historicfairbury.com which is the web site of the Fairbury Echoes Museum.

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Dale C. Maley

Author Spotlight

Dale C. Maley is the author of the book ***Index Mutual Funds: How to Simplify Your Financial Life and Beat the Pros***. He was also a contributing author to Chapter 18 in the 2009 book ***The Bogleheads Guide to Retirement Planning***. Dale is a very successful private investor who has been a student of Financial Planning and Investing for over 33 years.

He was trained as an engineer at the University of Illinois and has been a practicing engineer for 36 years. His accomplishments as an engineer include the granting of 16 U.S. Patents and authorship of over 535 professional technical papers. He is also a member of the International Society of Automotive Engineers and the Society of Manufacturing Engineers.

Dale earned an MBA (Masters Degree in Business Administration) degree from Illinois State University. Dale became a Registered Financial Advisor in the State of Illinois in 2006. He works part-time as a fee-only financial planner. He is President of Maley Financial Planning.

One of Dale's hobbies is history, including the history of Fairbury, Illinois. He has given several lectures to local Fairbury community groups about the history of Fairbury. Both Dale and his wife are 5th generation citizens of Fairbury.

Dale is a descendant of John Edward Bodley and Mary Ann Voliva. His wife is a descendant of Benjamin Hieronymus and Alvira Darnall.

* * * * *

Also by Dale C. Maley

Index Mutual Funds: How to Simplify Your Financial Life and Beat the Pro's
How Asset Allocation Can Help You Achieve Your Financial Goals
Frequently Asked Questions & Answers about ETF's and Index Funds
Why We Don't Save Enough for Retirement and How You Can Save More
Are You Using the Right Rules to Plan Your Retirement?
How to Use Psychology to Achieve Your Financial Goals
Should Immediate Annuities Be a Tool in Your Retirement Planning Toolbox?
Who Wins the Variable Annuity Versus Mutual Fund Battle?
Will Your Children or Uncle Sam Inherit Your Estate?
What Are the Requirements for Becoming a Financial Planner?
Sell My Stocks Before the Baby Boomers Crash the Market?
How Do I Determine If I Have Saved Enough to Retire?
Don't Max Out My 401K?
Will Reverse Mortgages Be the Salvation of Baby Boomer Retirees?
Do I Need Ten, Twenty, or Thirty Times My Income to Retire?
How to Find a Good Financial Planner
Total Market or Slice-n-Dice for My Investment Portfolio?
What Safety Factor Are You Using for Your Retirement Plan?
How Much Income Do I Really Need in Retirement?
What Lessons Can We Learn from the Crash of 2008?
How to Invest for Retirement after the Crash of 2008
Rules-of-thumb or Retirement Planning Software?
Is Portfolio Rebalancing Worth It?
Do I Need Umbrella Insurance?
Got My First Job and How Do I Handle the 401K?
Are Black Swans Really Harmful to Ordinary Investors?
Should My Asset Allocation Include My Pension and Social Security?
Should I Pay Off My Mortgage Early?
How Does My Asset Allocation Compare to Everyone Else?
How Do I Maximize Retirement Income From My Portfolio?

Is Saving 10% of My Gross Income Good Enough?

Contribute to My Bad 401K or Go Taxable?

Do I Need an Investment Policy Statement?

Do I Need Long-Term Care Insurance?

Do I Need Long-Term Disability Insurance?

How to Read Your Way to Financial Wealth

How Do I Select the Correct Risk Level for My Portfolio?

How Do I Estimate Retirement Living Expenses?